

## Recliners for Karnataka MLAs

### Speaker's Unusual Plan to Improve Assembly Attendance Move raises questions amid state's financial concerns

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In an unusual bid to improve post-lunch attendance in the Karnataka Assembly, Speaker UT Khadar has proposed hiring 15 recliners for legislators to take short naps during sessions. The move has sparked criticism, with questions being raised about priorities, especially as the state faces financial constraints.

Khader justified the decision, claiming that many MLAs and MLCs leave the Vidhana Soudha after lunch and fail to return for afternoon proceedings. He argued that providing recliners in the Assembly lobby would allow lawmakers to rest and continue participating in legislative work.

#### Luxury or Necessity?

While the Speaker emphasized that the recliners would only be rented to avoid unnecessary expenditure, the proposal has drawn criticism, especially from the opposition. The BJP, which has been attacking the Congress government over its financial management, has accused it of pushing the state toward bankruptcy. The party claims that due to extravagant welfare schemes, Karnataka is struggling to clear outstanding debts in key departments like transport and energy.

Further, the move raises questions about discipline and commitment among lawmakers. Critics argue that elected representatives are expected to attend As-



sembly sessions attentively, not rely on designated napping spaces to ensure their participation.

#### Perks for Attendance?

The Speaker also highlighted other measures taken to improve attendance, such as providing free breakfast and lunch for MLAs and MLCs at the legislature. While Khadar claimed that these incentives have helped ensure better participation, they have also drawn skepticism about whether basic legislative duties should require such accommodations.

Budget Session and Assembly Events

The Karnataka Assembly Budget Session is set to begin on March 3, with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah presenting the state budget on March 7. Meanwhile, an assembly-organized book event will take place from February 28 to March 3 at the Vidhana Soudha, featuring book releases and panel discussions. As Karnataka grapples with financial challenges, the debate over taxpayer-funded perks for lawmakers is likely to intensify. Whether the Speaker's recliner proposal improves attendance or becomes another symbol of misplaced priorities remains to be seen.



## DK Shivakumar focuses on seats Congress lost in 2023 polls

Shivakumar urged defeated Congress candidates to stay active.

Congress aims to regain 60 lost seats.

Rahul, Kharge to lay Congress Bhavan foundations.

Shivakumar to push irrigation projects in Delhi.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC President DK Shivakumar has intensified efforts to rebuild the Congress party in constituencies where it suffered defeats in the 2023 Assembly elections. A day before his scheduled visit to New Delhi to meet Rahul Gandhi and AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, Shivakumar convened a meeting with 86 defeated Congress candidates, urging them to remain active and prepare for upcoming local body elections.

Shivakumar assured them that their dedication would be rewarded with party tickets for the 2028 Assembly polls, stating that internal surveys indicate the Congress has strong chances of winning back at least 60 of the 86 lost constituencies. He emphasized that the party is working on a strategy to strengthen its presence where it remains weak.

#### Focus on Party Organization and Expansion

The Deputy CM urged ministers to organize party workers' meetings from March 23 to April 1, stating that he and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would personally participate in these interactions. He also announced plans to establish new Congress Bhavans in various constituencies, inviting Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge to lay foundation stones for new offices, including one in Bengaluru, in March.

Additionally, Shivakumar confirmed the purchase of land for a Congress office in Ramanagara, stating, "We have all benefited from the party, and it is our responsibility to strengthen it." He mentioned that discussions with CM Siddaramaiah would finalize appointments of party workers to boards and corporations, with the list being streamlined by Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara.

#### Political Strategy and Delhi Visit

When asked about political strategist Sunil Kanugolu's role in Congress' organizational planning, Shivakumar said any decision would be taken at the national level. "He is the CM's political secretary, and we will consider his suggestions in the best interest of the party," he added.

Shivakumar also stated that he and CM Siddaramaiah would visit New Delhi with a final list of four nominees for MLC positions once the CM recovers from his knee injury. During his Delhi visit, Shivakumar will also meet the Union Jal Shakti Minister to discuss Karnataka's irrigation projects, emphasizing the need for swift action on pending approvals. "The file should be forwarded through Minister Somantha, who is from our state. If time permits, I will also meet AICC leaders," he stated.

## Protests in Belagavi Over Attack on Bus Conductor

### Pro-Kannada groups demand action as language row intensifies

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

Tensions escalated in Belagavi as Karnataka Rakshana Vedike members staged a protest on Tuesday over the assault on a KSRTC bus conductor allegedly for not speaking in Marathi. The incident, which took place on February 22, has fueled fresh disputes between pro-Kannada and pro-Marathi groups in the region. Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Rohan Jagadeesh confirmed that Karnataka Rakshana Vedike leader Praveen Shetty was taken into preventive custody to maintain law and order. "The protest was being held in the middle of a busy road, causing disruptions," he said. Meanwhile, Karnataka Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy visited Belagavi BIMS Hospital to check on conductor Mahadevappa Hukkeri, who has been receiving treatment for the past three days. Expressing support, Reddy condemned the assault and dismissed the POC



case filed against the conductor as "bogus." The incident occurred near Sulebhavi when a group of Marathi-speaking youths allegedly attacked Hukkeri and the bus driver for not speaking Marathi. Police investigations revealed that a boy and a girl had initially confronted the conductor over a language dispute before calling their associates, who later assaulted him. In response, five individ-

uals have been arrested so far. Police also received a counter-complaint from the girl, who alleged that the conductor made indecent remarks toward her. The case has further heightened linguistic tensions in Belagavi, a long-standing flashpoint between Karnataka and Maharashtra over language and territorial issues. Authorities continue to monitor the situation to prevent further unrest.

## Twist in Belagavi Bus Conductor Assault Case

### Family Moves to Withdraw POC SO Complaint Family denies language row, urges end to controversy

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

The family of the minor girl who filed a POC SO case against a state transport bus conductor has announced their decision to withdraw the complaint, stating that the incident is being wrongly projected as a language dispute between Kannada and Marathi speakers. The case had escalated tensions between Karnataka and Maharashtra. The controversy began when four individuals were arrested for assaulting the bus conductor after he allegedly failed to respond in Marathi. Later, the minor girl lodged a counter-complaint, accusing the conductor of misconduct, leading to a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The incident took place on

Friday on the outskirts of Belagavi, a district bordering Maharashtra, and quickly turned into a political flashpoint between the two states. However, the girl's family has now released a video statement refuting claims that the matter is linked to language tensions. The girl's mother, speaking in the video, explained that her children were returning from a hospital visit when an argument broke out over a bus ticket issue. "It is being falsely projected as a Kannada-Marathi dispute. We respect Kannada as much as Marathi, and there is no discrimination in this matter," she clarified. The family expressed distress over the escalating tensions and affirmed their decision to withdraw the case. "We don't want this issue to create divisions between Karnataka and Maharashtra. We are Kannadigas too; our language may be Marathi, but we have no bias," she stated. She further emphasized that the



decision to withdraw the case was made voluntarily, with no external pressure. "Injustice has happened to our daughter, but considering the situation, we will withdraw the case. We request that the issue not be escalated further," she added.

Police Await Formal Withdrawal Process

Belagavi Police Commissioner Iada Martin Marbaniang confirmed that he had seen the family's video statement but stated that they had not yet approached the police officially to withdraw the complaint. "For closing the case, certain legal procedures need to be followed. Their statements must be officially recorded at the police station," he explained. Meanwhile, action has been taken against the Marihal police station inspector for allegedly delaying the registration of the conductor's complaint regarding his assault. The officer has been transferred and issued a charge memo seeking an explanation for the delay. Home Minister G Parameshwara, addressing reporters in Bengaluru, stated that he had requested a verification report on why the POC SO case was registered. On the inspector's transfer, he remarked that such actions are standard police procedures.



# Hesaraghatta Grassland Declared as Conservation Reserve



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government has officially declared the Hesaraghatta grassland, spanning 5,678.32 acres in Yelahanka taluk, as the Greater Hesaraghatta Grassland Conservation Reserve. A gazette notification was issued on Monday following a cabinet decision taken on January 30. The move comes as a long-awaited victory for conservationists, experts, and the forest and animal husbandry departments. The proposal had also been approved during the 18th State Board for Wildlife meeting chaired by the chief minister on October 7, 2024. The declaration, made under Section 36(A) of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, aims to safeguard the region's endangered

wildlife species.

Despite previous cabinet approval, an official government order was necessary to ensure protection. A forest department official stated that Hesaraghatta has often been targeted for residential and commercial development due to soaring land prices. "This declaration provides much-needed relief, preventing encroachments and unchecked urbanization," the official added.

The grassland plays a vital role as Bengaluru's carbon sink, mitigating climate change and supporting biodiversity. It houses over 285 bird species, including the critically endangered Lesser Florican, migratory raptors from Europe and Central Asia, and vulnerable species like the Greater Spotted

Eagle and Red-necked Falcon. Additionally, the area is home to smooth-coated otters, 13 amphibian species, and 111 butterfly species. The reserve covers government land across multiple villages, including Byatha, Kodihalli, Kakolu, Mattukoru, Channasandra, Sonnenahalli, Dasenahalli, Hesaraghatta, Ivarakondapura, and the Hesaraghatta Grass Farms. The grassland also serves as a crucial catchment area for the Thippagondanahalli reservoir and the Arkavathi River, helping recharge groundwater levels. With this declaration, Karnataka aims to preserve one of Bengaluru's last remaining grassland ecosystems, shielding it from future threats of urbanization and political turmoil.



## Constable Arrested for Assaulting 17-Year-Old Rape Survivor

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A police constable from Bommanahalli police station, identified as Arun Thonepa, has been arrested by the Mico Layout police for allegedly sexually assaulting a 17-year-old rape survivor. The constable reportedly exploited the minor under the guise of assisting her with a prior case. Alongside Thonepa, the victim's boyfriend, Vicky, was also arrested after the girl's mother lodged a complaint against him.

The chain of events began when the victim and her mother visited the Bommanahalli police station on December 18, 2024, to file a complaint against Vicky, a neighbor who had allegedly assaulted the girl repeatedly after promising marriage. According to an FIR filed on February 13, 2025, at Mico Layout police station, Vicky had physically assaulted and threatened the minor in May 2024. It was during this initial complaint process that Constable Thonepa approached the victim, offering help with her case and promising to secure her a job.

However, the FIR reveals a disturbing turn: over the course of a week, Thonepa allegedly took the girl to a hotel room in BTM Layout on three separate occasions. There, he reportedly forced her to consume alcohol before raping her. The constable is also accused of blackmailing the victim, threatening to release private videos of her on social media if she spoke out. The Mico Layout police have charged both Thonepa and Vicky under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Security Guard Booked for Assaulting Minor

In an unrelated case, the HAL police have registered a POCSO case against a 28-year-old security guard accused of sexually assaulting a 17-year-old Class 10 student. The complaint, filed by the victim's mother on Sunday night, alleges that the guard had been in a relationship with the minor for two years. A recent dispute between the two reportedly brought the matter to light. The police are investigating the circumstances surrounding the allegations. Both incidents have sparked outrage, raising concerns over the safety of minors and the abuse of authority in Karnataka. Investigations into the two cases are ongoing.

# Home Minister Seeks Report on Assault of KSRTC Bus Conductor

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara has directed the IGP and SP of Belagavi to submit an immediate report on the circumstances that led to the filing of a POCSO case against KSRTC bus conductor Mahadev Hukkeri, who was assaulted by a group of Marathi-speaking individuals in Balekundri for asking a passenger to speak in Kannada. The minister also sought details of the attack on the conductor, which occurred while he was performing his duties on a Belagavi-Balekundri bus. His demand for clarity came soon after the transfer of Marihal Station Police Inspector Gururaj Kalyaneshetti, who had registered the POCSO case against the conductor following the assault. Parameshwara stated that Kannada organisations had been granted permission to hold protests on Tuesday, urging them to remain peaceful. He warned that any acts of



violence during the demonstrations would invite legal consequences.

**Tension on Karnataka-Maharashtra Border**

The ongoing language dispute has further escalated tensions in the Karnataka-Maha-

raashtra border areas, leading to the temporary suspension of bus services between the two states. The Home Minister assured that services would resume once the situation normalizes. Amid growing pressure from Kannada organisations, the police have withdrawn the POCSO case against the conductor. Sources indicate that the decision was made after a request from the minor girl who had initially filed the complaint. In response to the assault, Kannada activists, led by Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV) President Narayangowda, staged a large rally in Belagavi. Protesters demanded strict action against the Marathi group responsible for the attack and criticized District Collector Mohammad Roshan for allegedly favoring the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES). They urged the DC to reject demands for providing official documents in Marathi to Marathi-speaking residents in Belagavi.

# Karnataka Housing Department Fails Slum Dwellers, Say Protesters

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Slum dwellers and activists staged a protest at Freedom Park on Monday, accusing the Karnataka Housing Department, led by Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan, of failing to provide land ownership rights to over 1.25 lakh poor families, mostly from SC/ST communities. They alleged that the department has done little for the urban poor and demanded urgent action. A Narasimha Murthy from Slum Janandolana Karnataka criticized officials in the department for being "pro-rich" and accused them of deliberately stalling files related to slum development. He further claimed that Minister Zameer Ahmed has not taken any significant steps to improve the living conditions of slum dwellers. "Under his leadership, development and welfare measures have not progressed. We demand a sep-

arate ministry dedicated to slum development, like in Telangana and Maharashtra," Murthy said. Out of the 3.36 lakh families living in slums across Karnataka, only 1.64 lakh have been granted land ownership rights under the "rights allocation" scheme introduced in 2020. Activists called for the allocation of ₹5,000 crore in the 2025-26 budget to mark the 50th anniversary of the Karnataka Slum Development Board and accelerate slum development initiatives. They also urged the government to resume the process of declaring private areas as slums, arguing that this recognition would improve living conditions and provide better opportunities for residents. Additionally, they demanded the swift completion of housing complexes for slum dwellers under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in Karnataka.







## HC Rejects Lakshya Sen's Plea in Birth Certificate Forgery Case

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court has dismissed the petitions filed by ace badminton player Lakshya Sen, his family members, and coach U Vimal Kumar in a case related to alleged birth certificate forgery. The court ruled that there was prima facie evidence necessitating an investigation into the matter.

The case stems from a private complaint filed by M G Nagaraj, who alleged that Lakshya Sen's parents, Dhirendra and Nirmala Sen, along with his brother Chirag Sen, coach U Vimal Kumar, and a Karnataka Badminton Association employee, manipulated birth records. The alleged forgery, reducing the age of Lakshya and Chirag by about two and a half years, was purportedly done to enable participation in age-restricted badminton tournaments and gain government benefits. Nagaraj backed his allegations with documents obtained under the RTI Act and requested the court to summon original records

from the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The court subsequently directed the High Grounds police to investigate, leading to an FIR under IPC Sections 420 (cheating), 468 (forgery), and 471 (using forged documents as genuine).

Lakshya Sen and the other petitioners had earlier secured an interim order in 2022, halting the probe. They argued that the complaint was baseless and motivated by personal vendetta, alleging Nagaraj's daughter was not selected for the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy in 2020.

However, Justice M G Uma dismissed the petitions, stating that sufficient documentary evidence justified an investigation. The court also noted that the petitioners' counsel failed to present arguments despite multiple opportunities and denied further time requests.

With the High Court's ruling, the investigation into the case will now proceed as directed.

## Anti-social elements using language as pretext for hooliganism: Hebbalkar

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar on Monday strongly condemned the assault on a NWKRTC bus conductor by a group of Marathi-speaking individuals for not conversing in Marathi. The incident took place in Balekundri, within her Belagavi Rural Assembly constituency. Hebbalkar, who is recovering from an accident, stated that she had immediately contacted police officials and instructed them to arrest the accused. She emphasized that Belagavi has been fostering linguistic harmony, and it is unacceptable for anti-social elements to use language differences as a pretext for hooliganism. "We are first Indians and then Kannadigas. Certain miscreants are trying to exploit this situation for political gain, which I strongly condemn," she said. The minister reaffirmed that her constituency had moved beyond linguistic disputes and that such attacks on government employees were intolerable.



On the POCSO case filed against the conductor, she maintained that the truth would emerge through the investigation. "Some lower-level officials have made mistakes, and I have already spoken to the home minister and DIG to ensure a fair inquiry," she said. Hebbalkar also addressed concerns over government schemes, dismissing opposition claims of delays. She assured that Gruha Lakshmi beneficiaries

would receive funds within the next eight days. Meanwhile, Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy visited Hebbalkar at her residence in Kuvempunagar to check on her health, noting that she still required rest. Hebbalkar mentioned that she would undergo a CT scan and, if cleared by doctors, would attend the upcoming budget session starting March 3.

## Vijayendra Demands Tough Action Against Attackers of NWKRTC Conductor



TPN Correspondent | Mysuru

BJP state president Vijayendra on Monday called for immediate action against those who attacked a NWKRTC bus conductor for not speaking in Marathi, urging the state government to send a strong message against such lawlessness. Stressing that Kannadigas have no interest in regional conflicts, Vijayendra hoped the government would refrain from politicizing the issue. He also criticized the Congress government for failing to implement its guarantee schemes effectively and accused it of pushing KSRTC

into financial distress. Further, he blamed the government for creating an energy sector crisis by failing to deposit funds needed for free power distribution. Leader of Opposition R Ashoka alleged that law and order deteriorates whenever Congress is in power. Addressing the FIR against former MP Pratap Simha, he remarked that such cases were not new for the BJP leader. Ashoka also revealed that Simha had faced a death threat over his newspaper columns. The former MP met Vijayendra for discussions on the matter.

## Big Relief for Commuters as Kengeri Station Gets Second Entry

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Kengeri railway station is set to become more commuter-friendly, with the second entry being developed rapidly for a planned launch in May. This will significantly ease the movement of passengers interchanging between the Metro and railway stations, providing a legal and shorter pathway instead of the current long detour or risky trolley path. The station, a crucial hub for those traveling between Bengaluru and Mysuru, is being redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat station scheme with an investment of nearly ₹20 crore. On average, 20,000 passengers use the station daily, with 58 trains halting here, including the Chamundi Express, Malgudi Express, Vishwamanava



Express, and the Mysuru-Bengaluru MEMU. Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of Bengaluru Division, Krishna Chaitanya, highlighted that the new entry would ensure seamless pedestrian connectivity. "Currently, many commuters take an unsafe 1.5 km trolley path. The new entry will cut this distance to just 500 metres and provide direct access," he said. The approach road through the Railway Colo-

ny is also being built to improve accessibility. The redevelopment includes several facilities such as a dedicated waiting hall, ramps for disabled passengers, and expanded parking space—1,600 sqm for two-wheelers and 1,800 sqm for four-wheelers. A cafeteria is also being set up. With 60% of the work completed, officials are optimistic about meeting the deadline.

Commuters, especially students and cab users, are eagerly waiting for the second entry to open. "Many students traveling to Hyderabad or Mysuru will benefit. Right now, we take an unauthorized 700-metre path, but this new route will save time and effort," said Sripad Ullas, a BTEch student.

## Horamavu Residents Struggle as BESCO Road Digging Damages Water Lines



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Residents of Horamavu are facing severe water shortages after Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM) dug up roads for cable work, damaging Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) pipelines in Prakruthi Township, Balaji Layout, and surrounding areas.

Every time the valve is turned on, water gushes out from broken pipes, forcing authorities to shut supply for repairs. With no immediate fix in sight, hundreds of residents have been left relying on private water tankers, further fueling the tanker mafia. A resident from Prakruthi Township lamented that damaged water lines and

overflowing leaks have also led to severe road damage, with neither BESCOM, BWSSB, nor BBMP taking responsibility. "At least six locations on Horamavu-Agara Road have BWSSB lines damaged. The roads are being cut repeatedly for repairs, but leaks keep surfacing elsewhere due to the pressure," another resident added. Before BWSSB's Cauvery Stage 5 project, residents spent up to ₹5,000 per month on tanker water. Now, despite having Cauvery connections, they are once again forced to depend on private suppliers due to poor coordination between civic agencies. A BWSSB official assured that field engineers will be deployed to locate and fix all leakages in the area at the earliest.

## Woman Dies in Hit-and-Run on Karnataka Expressway

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A woman lost her life in a tragic hit-and-run incident on a Karnataka expressway in Chitradurga. CCTV footage captured the horrifying moment when a speeding car hit the victim, flinging her into the air before she landed three lanes away. She succumbed to a fatal head injury on the spot.

The accident, which occurred last Sunday, was recorded on a 30-second CCTV clip. The footage showed the woman crossing the expressway at night along with another woman and two children. She had barely reached the second lane from the divider when the speeding vehicle struck her and fled without stopping.

The other woman and children, who were following closely, had a narrow escape. The video also showed a passerby rushing to check on the victim after the collision.

Authorities have registered a police case, and an investigation is underway to identify the vehicle and its driver. Efforts are ongoing to track down the suspect using CCTV footage and other available evidence.







### Who Is Sajjan Kumar, Ex-Congress MP Sentenced To Life In 1984 Sikh Riots

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A Delhi court has sentenced former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar to life imprisonment for his role in the murders of Jaswant Singh and his son Tarundeep Singh during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Special Judge Kaveri Baweja delivered the verdict, rejecting the complainant's demand for the death penalty. The case dates back to November 1, 1984, when mobs incited by political leaders targeted Sikhs following the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. Kumar was found guilty of instigating and participating in the brutal killing of Jaswant Singh and his son, who were doused in petrol and burned alive by a mob of Congress supporters. The court convicted Kumar on February 12 and sought a psychological report from Tihar Jail, where he is currently lodged. Sajjan Kumar, now 79, was a key accused in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, which led to the killing of thousands of Sikhs, mainly in Delhi. Witnesses testified that he delivered inflammatory speeches and provided rioters with money and liquor. Despite multiple allegations, his political influence delayed legal action for decades. Born on September 23, 1945, Kumar was a corporator and bakery owner before entering politics. He served as a Delhi Councillor in 1977 before becoming a three-time Member of Parliament. He was a close associate of Sanjay Gandhi and won the Outer Delhi Lok Sabha seat in 1980, 1991, and 2004. His involvement in the riots was widely documented. A 1984 fact-finding report by the People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) and the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) named him as one of the main instigators. Riot survivors confronted him at a police station, and he was accused of conspiring with law enforcement to erase evidence. His appeals to the Supreme Court for bail were repeatedly rejected in 2020 and 2022. While granted bail in one riot-related case in 2022, he remained in jail due to his previous conviction. With this latest sentencing, Sajjan Kumar continues to serve life imprisonment for his role in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

### Tamil Actor-Politician Ranjana Nachiyaar Quits BJP Over NEP



TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Actor-turned-politician Ranjana Nachiyaar resigned from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday, citing opposition to the three-language policy. In her resignation, she stated that imposing a third language was unacceptable. The issue has sparked fresh political debates in Tamil Nadu, with the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) continuing its strong opposition to any move perceived as promoting Hindi. The party has long argued that such policies threaten Tamil identity and culture. Meanwhile, AIADMK MP M Thambidurai criticized the DMK's stance, accusing the party of using the language issue as a political tool ahead of elections. He questioned the state government's approach, pointing out that while it opposes the National Education Policy (NEP), it continues to allow CBSE schools that follow a multi-language curriculum. "The state government is permitting numerous CBSE schools, which follow a trilingual system. If the DMK is serious about the issue, why does it allow these schools to operate? The government is only raising this matter now for political mileage," Thambidurai said. The DMK, however, has been actively protesting against the language policy. On Monday, party cadres staged a demonstration in Tiruchirappalli, distributing pamphlets and urging the public to oppose the policy. DMK spokesperson TKS Elangovan reiterated the party's concerns, accusing the central government of using education policies to push religious and ideological agendas. With elections approaching, the debate over language imposition is once again at the forefront of Tamil Nadu's political landscape.

# Police denied BJP's 'Mysuru Chalo' rally

TPN Correspondent | Mysuru

The Mysuru police denied permission for the BJP-led 'Mysuru Chalo' rally on Monday, preventing party leaders and activists from protesting against the violence at Udayagiri police station. Disappointed by the police action, BJP state president BY Vijayendra and Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, who had traveled to Mysuru for the protest, returned to Bengaluru, vowing to continue their fight against what they described as the Congress government's "anti-Hindu policies." The Rashtira Suraksha Janandolana Samiti, along with BJP leaders, had planned to march from Gun House Circle to Kote Anjaneya Swamy Temple, condemning the violence. However, police denied permission citing law and order concerns. Meanwhile, the Dalitha Mahasabha and Mysuru District Youth Congress Committee had also sought permission to hold rallies countering the BJP's stance, accusing the party of portraying the Muslim community in a negative light. With police maintaining a strong security presence and over a thousand personnel deployed, BJP and Samiti leaders attempted to gather at Gun House Circle but were turned away. The situation grew tense as Vijayendra and Ashoka arrived in the city. While Vijayendra remained at a private hotel on the outskirts, Ashoka waited at the Government Guest House in Nazarbad for the Karnataka High Court's ruling on the matter. A single-judge bench of Justice R Devdas later



allowed BJP and Samiti to conduct a peaceful protest at the University of Mysore's football ground but barred participants from making provocative statements. Following this order, both Vijayendra and Ashoka decided to return to Bengaluru, expressing dissatisfaction with the restrictions. Before leaving, Ashoka alleged that Muslim fanatics had orchestrated the attack on Udayagiri police station with an intent to destroy it, citing a similar pattern of violence in Hubballi. He accused the Congress government of shielding the culprits and engaging in vote bank politics. "Despite having video footage of over 1,000 miscre-

ants, the police have arrested only 16. The main instigator was taken into custody just two days ago, and since Home Minister G Parameshwara's visit, the police have halted further arrests," he claimed. Ashoka further alleged that the Congress government was pushing for the "Islamisation" of Karnataka, pointing to its previous decisions such as declaring a holiday for Tipu Jayanti. "Now, allowing Muslims to offer prayers openly is part of the same agenda. Even in Bengaluru, armed Muslim miscreants are moving freely. We will continue our fight against these policies and raise the issue in the Assembly," he asserted.

## Tharoor's Post With Piyush Goyal Fuels Congress Rift Speculation

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor's latest post on X, featuring a photograph with Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and British Secretary of State for Trade Jonathan Reynolds, has intensified speculation about his future with the party. The image, shared after a discussion on the India-UK Free Trade Agreement, comes amid reports of growing tensions between Tharoor and the Congress over his recent remarks on Kerala's ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) government. In his post, Tharoor wrote, "Good to exchange words with Jonathan Reynolds, Britain's Secretary of State for Business and Trade, in the company of his Indian counterpart, Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal. The long-stalled FTA negotiations have been revived, which is most welcome." The photograph, featuring a smiling Tharoor alongside Goyal, has triggered fresh speculation about his political stance. The post follows criticism from the Congress after Tharoor praised Kerala's entrepreneurial growth under the LDF. The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF), the prima-



ry opposition in the state, took issue with his comments, with the party's mouthpiece Veekshanam Daily calling it "suicidal" to weaken the Congress from within. The criticism stemmed from an article by Tharoor in an English daily, where he highlighted Kerala's progress in the startup sector, which was perceived as an endorsement of the CPM government. Tharoor later clarified that he was praising the state's achievements, not the ruling party. Adding to the controversy,

Tharoor had earlier lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's negotiation skills following a statement by former US President Donald Trump. Trump had described Modi as a "much tougher negotiator," to which Tharoor responded, "To hear a man like Donald Trump, whose Defence Secretary called him 'the greatest negotiator in the world,' announcing the Indian Prime Minister is a better negotiator... that sounds like something Mr Modi can put in the bank, that sounds very good." This remark also drew criticism within Congress circles, with some questioning his stance. Tharoor defended himself, stating that he spoke in India's interest and not merely in terms of party lines. However, speculation about his strained ties with Congress has only grown. When asked about the issue on Sunday, he refused to comment, deflecting the conversation by pointing to the India-Pakistan cricket match. As speculation over his future in the party mounted, Tharoor responded on Tuesday, stating, "If the party wants me... I will be there. If not, I have my own things to do. You should not think I don't have any options."

## Karnataka to Hold Talks with Maharashtra to Ease Tensions

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

In response to the escalating tensions along the Karnataka-Maharashtra border, Karnataka has decided to hold discussions with Maharashtra to de-escalate the situation following the recent attack on KSRTC bus conductor Mahadevappa Hukkeri by a group of Marathi-speaking individuals in Balekundri. Home Minister G Parameshwara urged Maharashtra to take immediate action against those involved in violence in border towns and cities. Emphasizing the need for restraint, he stated, "Disputes over linguistic issues in Belagavi require careful handling. This applies to Maharashtra as well. We should not allow this unrest to persist." He reiterated that Karnataka has acted against those who attacked the conductor and urged Maharashtra to follow suit.

**State Ministers Rally Behind Conductor**

Several Karnataka ministers, in-

cluding Ramalinga Reddy, Lagavi, assured that the Karnata-



mi Hebbalkar, Satish Jarkiholi, and Shivaraj Tangadagi, strongly condemned the police for registering a POCSO case against the conductor. They asserted that the case was false and should never have been filed. Ramalinga Reddy, who met the injured conductor at BIMS Hospital in Be-

ka government would take steps to resolve tensions with Maharashtra. He criticized the attacks on buses, warning that such acts would only harm both states financially and disrupt public transport. He further urged Shiv Sena leaders to stop inciting violence over language disputes and

instead promote peace. Tangadagi reaffirmed that Belagavi is an integral part of Karnataka and warned that strict action would be taken against those attempting to disturb harmony. Senior Congress leader Umashri also visited the conductor in the hospital.

**Growing Regional Tensions**

Meanwhile, Kannada activists have reported increasing hostility. A leader of the Karnataka Rakshana Vedike (KRV) alleged that he was attacked multiple times in Jamboti for speaking Kannada. In response, KRV President Narayana Gowda has called for a large-scale protest, urging Kannadigas to participate in the 'Belagavi Chalo' march on Tuesday to condemn the attack on the conductor. With tensions mounting, the Karnataka government has temporarily suspended bus services between Karnataka and Maharashtra until the situation stabilizes.



## Tourism Is In DNA Of India.. - Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat



**TPN Correspondent | Bhubaneswar**  
Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Monday emphasized that tourism has been an integral part of India's heritage for thousands of years, calling it a tradition deeply embedded in the country's DNA. Speaking at an event organized by the Odisha Tourism Department in collaboration with FICCI, the Union Tourism Minister highlighted India's rich cultural and religious tourism history. "Tourism is in the DNA of India. The Kedarnath Temple was built around 2,500 years ago when the USA did not exist, and Europe was entering the Bronze Age," he remarked.

He noted that Indians have historically prioritized visiting temples and tourist destinations whenever they had disposable income, a trend that has intensified post-COVID. Praising the central government's efforts, Mr. Shekhawat said that the world's perception of India has changed significantly in the last decade due to the scale and speed of development under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. He also underscored the importance of a robust transportation network in boosting tourism. "India has witnessed a revolution in the field of commutation over the past 10 years," he said, asserting that improved connectivity has played a key role in strengthening the tourism sector.



## Kerala BJP Leader PC George Remanded to 14-Day Police Custody in Hate Speech Case

**TPN Correspondent | Kottayam**  
BJP leader PC George has been remanded to 14-day police custody by the Erattupetta Judicial First Class Magistrate Court in connection with a hate speech case. Following the court's decision, he was taken to Kottayam Medical College for a check-up, as the magistrate considered medical reports indicating health concerns. George had earlier surrendered before the Erattupetta court after the Kerala High Court rejected his anticipatory bail plea. The case stems from his controversial remarks against Muslims during a television debate in January, which led to a complaint filed by a Muslim Youth League leader. During the debate, George made provocative statements, accusing the Muslim community of harboring anti-national sentiments and suggesting they should move to Pakistan. His remarks led to the Erattupetta police registering a case under Sections BNS 196(1)(a), 299, and 120(o) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with provisions of the Kerala Police Act. Authorities had attempted to arrest him earlier, but he was not at his residence in Poonjar. He later sought two days to appear before the court. Initially, the court had sent him to custody until 6 PM today due to a defect in the police's custody application, directing them to resubmit it with corrections. George later issued an apology via Facebook, retracting his earlier statement that labeled all Muslims in India as terrorists. "I unconditionally retract my reply and apologize to all my Muslim brothers and sisters who love this country and were hurt by it. However, I still believe that a small percentage among them hold extremist thoughts, and I will always strongly oppose them and those who silently support them," he wrote.

# HD Kumaraswamy Slams Congress Over Udayagiri Violence

**TPN Correspondent | Mysuru**

Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy on Monday criticized the Congress government over the recent stone-throwing incident at Udayagiri police station, questioning whether the attackers should be punished or protected. He urged the government to take strict action instead of appeasing lawbreakers. Addressing the state's financial policies, Kumaraswamy accused the Congress of burdening common people by increasing taxes on essential commodities. "They claim the economy is strong, yet they are raising the prices of water, milk, and other essentials. Is this their definition of economic strength?" he asked. He also slammed the government for hastily approving B Khata properties despite pending legal cases, alleging financial mismanagement. Warning against leniency in law enforcement, Kumaraswamy said tolerating attacks on police today could lead to

criminals targeting homes tomorrow, creating chaos in society. Taking a swipe at Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, without naming him, he mocked his chief ministerial aspirations, saying, "I heard someone say they will contest the next election. It seems my friends are losing sleep over this." On the MUDA scam, Kumaraswamy accused the government of manipulating reports to protect certain individuals while framing the innocent. He dismissed the SIT probe into his Bidadi land, asserting that he had legally purchased it 40 years ago. "Earlier, they claimed no documents existed. Now, they have suddenly found originals. These are mere intimidation tactics," he said. Questioning the state government over rising Metro fares, he asked why similar hikes had not been implemented in other states if the central government was responsible. He reiterated that Kannadigas were unfairly targeted with price hikes,



blaming the Congress for reckless financial decisions disguised as economic stability.

## Maha Kumbh Mela Area Declared No-Vehicle Zone

**TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj**

In preparation for the final special bathing day of the Maha Kumbh Mela, coinciding with Mahashivratri on February 26, authorities have declared the Mela area a no-vehicle zone from 4 PM on Tuesday. The restriction will extend to the entire Prayagraj from 6 PM onwards to manage the massive gathering of devotees. According to an official statement, these restrictions aim to ensure smooth crowd movement, with exemptions granted to vehicles carrying essential goods, including milk, vegetables, medicines, and fuel. Emergency services and government personnel, such as doctors and police officers, will also be allowed unrestricted movement. The Mela Police have urged visitors to follow the designated bathing areas based on their entry routes. Devotees arriving from the Dakshini Jhunsi route are directed to use Arail Ghat, while those from Uttari Jhunsi should proceed to Harishchandra Ghat and Old GT Ghat. Entrants from Pande Kshetra are advised to bathe at Bharadwaj Ghat, Nagavasuki Ghat, Mori Ghat, Kali Ghat, Ram Ghat, or Hanuman Ghat. Pilgrims arriving through the Arail sector should use Arail Ghat. Officials have also advised devotees to visit their nearest Shiva temples for prayers instead of crowding major pilgrimage sites. Pontoon bridges



will be regulated based on crowd density to prevent congestion, and devotees are urged to complete their rituals and return to their destinations without unnecessary movement. The Maha Kumbh Mela, held once ev-

ery 12 years, began on January 13 and will conclude on February 26. The grand religious gathering has already witnessed over 63 crore visitors, according to the Uttar Pradesh government.

## Preity Zinta Slams Congress Over Loan Write-Off Allegation

**TPN Correspondent | Mumbai**

Actor Preity Zinta has strongly refuted allegations made by the Kerala unit of the Congress that she had an Rs 18-crore loan written off in exchange for handing over her social media accounts to the BJP. She called the claims "fake news" and accused the party of indulging in "vile gossip." On Monday, the official X handle of Kerala Congress shared a post claiming, "She gave her social media accounts to BJP and got 18 Cr written off and the bank collapsed last week. Depositors are on the streets for their money." In a sharp



response, Zinta dismissed the allegations, asserting that she manages her own social media accounts and had repaid the loan in full over a decade ago. "No, I operate my social media accounts myself, and shame on you for promoting FAKE NEWS! No one wrote

off anything or any loan for me. I'm shocked that a political party or their representative is promoting fake news and indulging in vile gossip & click baits using my name & images," she posted. She further clarified, "For the record, a loan was taken and FULLY PAID BACK over 10 years ago. Hope this clarifies and helps so there are no misunderstandings in the future." Following Zinta's rebuttal, the Kerala Congress' post received a community note on X, stating that she had clarified the claim as false, along with a link to her statement.

## Kerala Man Kills 5 Family Members, Lover, Mother In Critical Condition

**TPN Correspondent Thiruvananthapuram:**

A 23-year-old man, identified as Afan, has confessed to killing six people, including his 13-year-old brother, grandmother, paternal uncle, aunt, and a young woman said to be his lover, in a shocking case of mass murder in Venjaramoodu. The incident came to light on Monday evening when Afan walked into the Venjaramoodu police station and admitted to committing the crime. Police confirmed the deaths of five individuals, while his mother, who was also attacked, remains in critical condition at a private medical college hospital. Authorities revealed that the murders took place across three houses in the Venjaramoodu area, near the state capital. Afan has since been hospitalized after claiming he consumed poison following the killings. Police have yet to disclose the motive behind the gruesome act and are conducting a thorough investigation into the circumstances that led to the crime.



## Delhi to Jaipur in 30 minutes? India's first hyperloop test track

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

India's first hyperloop test track, developed by IIT Madras with support from the Ministry of Railways, has been successfully completed. The 422-meter-long track is expected to pave the way for futuristic high-speed transportation, with the potential to cover 350 km in just 30 minutes—bringing cities like Delhi and Jaipur closer than ever before. Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw shared the development on X (formerly



Twitter), emphasizing the significance of government-academia collaboration in driving

innovation in transportation. The project, funded by the Ministry of Railways, was constructed at the IIT Madras campus. Elated with the progress, Vaishnaw announced, "The first pod of 422 meters will go a long way in developing technologies. After the first two grants of one million dollars each, the third grant of one million dollars will be given to IIT Madras for further development of the hyperloop project." The Railways is now planning to undertake the first commercial hyperloop





## Happy Shivratri

# Life of Lord Shiva is reflection of principles of Santana Dharma

- Santana dharma made a most simple god as supreme God.
- Which emphasis equality there is no caste hierarchy in Sanatana dharma
- Life of lord shivs is shared equally between the divine beings of the Himalayas and the cremators in graveyards.
- A common individual like god is elevated to the status of the supreme deity Layakarakudu.
- In Sanatana Dharma, there is no place for hierarchy or untouchability.

Lord Shiva embodies simplicity and strength, serving as a profound representation of the principles of Sanatana Dharma, which emphasizes accessibility and equality for all individuals, regardless of their social status or background. Unlike many deities who are often depicted with opulence and grandeur, Lord Shiva is portrayed in a manner that reflects humility and a deep connection to the natural world. He is not adorned with lavish jewels or surrounded by extravagant symbols of wealth; instead, he finds significance in the serene heights of the majestic Himalayas, where he meditates in solitude, as well as in the solemnity of graveyards, where he reminds us of the transient nature of life and the importance of embracing mortality.

This duality in his presence—both in the tranquil mountains and the quiet resting places of the departed—highlights his role as a protector and guide for all beings. Lord Shiva's joy is not found in material possessions but in the purity of devotion and the sincerity of offerings. He is known to accept even the smallest gestures of love and reverence, such as a simple drop of water offered as Prasadam, symbolizing that true devotion comes from the heart rather than from the grandeur of the offering.

Moreover, Lord Shiva's approachability is a testament to his inclusive nature. He welcomes everyone, regardless of their circumstances, and encourages individuals to seek a personal connection with the divine. His appreciation for Vibhuti, the sacred ash made from the remnants of burnt offerings, further emphasizes this principle.

Vibhuti, composed of fundamental carbon molecules, serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of all life and the idea that even the most basic elements of existence can hold profound spiritual significance. Carbon is vital to life on Earth because it forms the basis of all living things. It's a key component of food, energy, and the Earth's climate. In essence, Lord Shiva stands as a beacon of simplicity, strength, and equality, inviting all to partake in the spiritual journey without barriers. His teachings encourage individuals to look beyond material wealth and societal divisions, fostering a sense of unity and shared humanity. Through his example, he inspires countless devotees to embrace humility, recognize the divine in everyday life, and find joy in the simplest acts of devotion.



**Dr. Buragadda Srinadh**



## The Ukraine Peace Talks: A Dangerous Game Played by Trump and Putin

This week, US-Russia peace talks over the fate of Ukraine have begun—but one glaring issue stands out: Ukraine itself has been notably excluded from the discussions. While this omission has rightfully drawn criticism, the underlying problem is far more complex. A peace deal could theoretically be brokered with an intermediary, but only if the talks acknowledge the harsh realities of the situation. The actual obstacles to peace—such as enforcing a ceasefire across a 1,000 km front line—are barely being addressed. What's unfolding is less a serious diplomatic effort and more a chaotic game of chess, where one side doesn't understand the rules, and the other is making them up as it goes along.

Donald Trump, the self-proclaimed "artist of the deal," has confidently declared that he could end the war in a single day. Meanwhile, Vladimir Putin and his inner circle are laughing behind the scenes. Humiliating the United States has long been a goal for the Russian leadership, and now, with Trump's assistance, they are enjoying just that. Pu-



tin is not negotiating in good faith; this is not his style. Whether in Georgia or Donbas, ceasefires have served as strategic traps in the past, and there's no reason to believe this time will be any different. Despite the mounting costs of the war, Putin remains steadfast in his demands: full control over Ukraine, either through annexation or by installing a puppet government. For Russia's conservative elites, Ukraine is seen as vital to Russia's imperial ambitions, while economic oligarchs covet its vast mineral resources and the potential for sanctions relief. Trump, amplifying Kremlin propaganda, helps legitimize the war in

the eyes of ordinary Russians.

While these talks may not result in Putin securing his ultimate goal of Ukraine, they are serving his broader objectives: easing sanctions, humiliating the US, and weakening NATO. With Trump's collaboration, Putin is getting exactly what he wants. The irony here is that Ukraine may not be the biggest loser in this situation. Kyiv has seen a decrease in US military aid, but it has also ramped up its own weapons

production and sought additional support from Europe. Today, Ukraine is in a much stronger position than it was three years ago, and it will continue to fight, with or without Washington's help.

The real casualty in these talks is the United States. Trump is willing to trade the country's global standing for the entertainment of Putin and the confusion of US allies. The world watches as the US president echoes the rhetoric of one of its greatest adversaries. The long-term damage to the US's reputation and to international security may be far greater than Trump realizes.



## Tamil vs Hindi: The Unending Tussle Over NEP

The ongoing confrontation between the Tamil Nadu government and the Centre over the National Education Policy (NEP) is poised to dominate the political landscape in the state, especially with the 2026 elections on the horizon. At the heart of this dispute is the Centre's insistence on implementing a three-language policy, which the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) vehemently opposes. While the Centre maintains that there will be no imposition of Hindi, the DMK refuses to back down, citing concerns of linguistic and regional identity.

### The History of Tamil Nadu's Two-Language Policy

The roots of this debate can be traced back to 1968 when the DMK, under the leadership of Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai, adopted the two-language policy. This policy rejected the central government's push for a three-language formula and emphasized Tamil and English as the primary languages of instruction in the state. Over the years, Tamil Nadu has steadfastly defended this policy, viewing the protection of Tamil as crucial to the state's identity.

Dravidian politics in Tamil Nadu has always been closely tied to the protection of Tamil. The strong opposition to Hindi, a symbol of North Indian dominance in the eyes of many in the South, has been one of the most defining features of the political narrative since the state's formation in 1949. The protests against Hindi imposition in the 1950s, culminating in the creation of linguistic states in 1956, set the stage for Tamil Nadu's unique relationship with language politics.

### Language: Still a Defining Issue in Politics?

Given this historical backdrop, the current confrontation over the NEP's three-language policy is not surprising. The policy suggests that any Indian language could be taught as a third language, but the DMK remains suspicious. Its leaders argue that, in practice, Hindi would become the third language in most schools. This suspicion has been heightened by recent comments from Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who stated that the Centre might withhold funds from Tamil Nadu if the state refuses to implement the NEP. The DMK's narrative positions this as an assault on the state's linguistic rights, fueling the party's political stance in the lead-up to the 2026 elections.

### The Three Dimensions of the Debate

The DMK's opposition to the NEP can be understood in three key dimensions. First, it sees the issue as a matter of federalism, arguing that education should remain under the state's control, not the Centre's. Since 1976, education has been placed on the Concurrent List, which allows both the Centre and states to legislate on the matter. The DMK contends that this has led to the gradual introduction of Hindi in Tamil Nadu schools, even though Tamil is the state's official language.

Second, the DMK frames this debate as one of Hindi imposition, alleging that the Centre is pushing Hindi onto non-Hindi speaking regions through its policies. Third, the confrontation is depicted as a broader ideological battle between Dravidian politics and Hindutva, which the DMK claims is being advanced by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its ideological partner, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

### BJP's Caution in Handling the Issue

As the DMK continues to project the NEP debate as a fight for Tamil identity, the BJP and the Centre must tread carefully. Any perceived coercion could bolster the DMK's position, especially with the party's narrative gaining traction in the state. The BJP must avoid turning the issue into a polarizing political battle, as this would only solidify the DMK's stance and alienate regional allies.

At the same time, the question arises whether the linguistic divide in Tamil Nadu still holds the same weight it once did. Can one truly advocate for the protection of Tamil while appreciating the cultural richness of Hindi and other languages? The intellectual discourse on language must evolve, moving away from political confrontations and instead focusing on the idea that the celebration of one language does not diminish the value of another.

As Tamil Nadu continues to grapple with this issue, one thing is clear: the emotional charge surrounding language in the state remains a potent force. Whether the debate will evolve or continue to fuel political campaigns remains to be seen. But one thing is certain—the tussle over the NEP will not die anytime soon.



# Amid global uncertainty, there is certainty of India's economic growth': PM Modi

- Emphasized strong economic growth despite global uncertainties.
- Highlighted reforms attracting global investors.
- Assam's infrastructure and business potential were key points.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

During the inaugural session of the Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized India's robust economic growth, even amid global uncertainties. Speaking to a gathering of business leaders and investors, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that despite the current volatile global environment, India's economy continues to garner attention and trust from experts worldwide.

PM Modi acknowledged the challenges posed by global uncertainties but assured that India stands out as a beacon of growth. He emphasized that experts, both domestic and international, continue to have confidence in India's rapid economic progress. Modi pointed to India's growing role in the global economy and highlighted the positive



investment climate the country offers, which has attracted attention from businesses across sectors.

He further noted that India's economic resilience is driven by its reforms, strategic partnerships, and the ability to adapt to changing global dynamics. The Prime Minister remarked that

the country is positioned well to achieve even greater growth, thanks to its vast potential, young workforce, and a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The Advantage Assam 2.0 Investment Summit is a significant platform for promoting investment in Assam and the northeastern region of India. Modi's

speech underscored the government's efforts to create an enabling environment for businesses, showcasing the region's potential for growth in sectors like infrastructure, manufacturing, and services.

The Prime Minister also reiterated that Assam, and the broader northeastern region, offer immense opportunities for businesses, driven by the government's focus on improving infrastructure, connectivity, and local industries. He assured that the government is committed to facilitating ease of doing business and fostering sustainable development in the region.

Modi's address reflects India's growing position on the global economic stage, highlighting its resilience and the increasing confidence of international stakeholders in its future growth prospects.



## Preserve India's Glaciers: Sonam Wangchuk's Open Letter to PM Modi

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Renowned climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, fresh from his recent tour of the United States, has penned an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling for urgent action to address the rapid melting of glaciers in India. In his letter, Wangchuk stresses the critical need for India to take a leadership role in the global fight to preserve these vital sources of freshwater.

Wangchuk, who gained international attention by carrying a piece of ice from a glacier in Ladakh to highlight the dire situation, warned of the severe consequences of inaction. During a press conference in the national capital, he drew attention to the situation in the Himalayas, which are home to many of India's major rivers. These glaciers, which provide a steady flow of water, are now retreating at an alarming rate due to climate change.

The activist's message to PM Modi was clear: the preservation of these glaciers is vital for the future of millions who depend on the water they provide. Wangchuk pointed out that if immediate steps are not taken to restore these glaciers, India could face a catastrophic water crisis. He suggested that, in the future, the next Maha Kumbh, which occurs every 144 years, may be held on dry land, as the rivers could run dry if the glaciers continue to melt.

Wangchuk's warning highlights the urgency of preserving the Himalayas' glaciers and ensuring that India becomes a global leader in tackling climate change. With rivers that support agriculture, industry, and daily life for millions of people, the survival of these glaciers is crucial for India's environmental and economic stability. Through his letter, Wangchuk calls on PM Modi to take immediate, decisive action to protect these invaluable natural resources before it's too late.



## Sword Over South States: MK Stalin Slams Delimitation, 'Hindi Imposition'

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

The upcoming delimitation exercise, which involves redrawing parliamentary constituencies based on population levels, has become the latest flashpoint in the ongoing tensions between Tamil Nadu's ruling DMK and the BJP-led central government. This exercise is expected to significantly alter the proportion of Lok Sabha MPs from southern states, and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has raised alarms over its potential impact on the state's representation in Parliament.

In a statement on Tuesday, Stalin called for an all-party meeting to discuss the issue, warning that the state's voice in the national legislature could be "crushed." He emphasized that Tamil Nadu, which has been successful in controlling its population growth, could either see minimal gains of only two additional seats or, more dramatically, lose up to eight seats if the centre opts for a redistribution of the 543 existing seats. Under such a scenario, the total number of Lok Sabha seats would increase, with Uttar Pradesh—a BJP stronghold—gaining additional seats, potentially making it easier for the BJP to win in the future.

Critics argue that this change could be skewed in favour of BJP-dominated states like Uttar Pradesh, leaving southern states like Tamil Nadu at a disadvantage. In response, Stalin reiterated that this issue is about Tamil Nadu's rights and asked all political parties to unite in defense of the state's representation.

Simultaneously, the state remains embroiled in a contentious debate over the National Education Policy (NEP) and the three-language policy, which the DMK has strongly criticized as an imposition of Hindi. This issue has sparked a renewed call for a "language war," evoking memories of fierce language riots in the 1930s and 1960s. Stalin's son, Udhayanidhi Stalin, has echoed the call, and the DMK has opposed any move to impose Hindi in Tamil Nadu's schools.

# NSA Ajit Doval Attends An Exhibition On Bangladeshi Minorities' Plight

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) recently organized an exhibition and panel discussion titled "The Never-Ending Persecution of Minorities in Bangladesh," highlighting the systemic discrimination and violence faced by religious and ethnic minorities. The event, held at the VIF Auditorium in Delhi, drew attention with the presence of India's National Security Advisor (NSA), Ajit Doval, KC



The exhibition, curated by FACT (Foundation Against Continuing Terrorism) presented visual documentation of human rights violations against Hindus, Buddhists, Christians and Ahmadiyya Muslims in Bangladesh. It showcased forced displacements, attacks, and persecution, emphasizing the increasing challenges these communities face.

The panel discussion, chaired by VIF Director Arvind Gupta featured distinguished experts including Ambassador Satish Chandra former Deputy National Security Advisor; Ambassador Veena Sikri former High Commissioner to Bangladesh; Francois Gautier Correspondent for *Le Monde Diplomatique*; and Anirban Ganguly Chairperson of the Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation. They provided insights into the historical, socio-political, and international aspects of the crisis, stressing the need for urgent intervention.

NSA Doval attended both the exhibition and panel discussion, reaffirming India's concerns over the situation in Bangladesh. The event underscored India's commitment to advocating for regional security and minority rights while also raising awareness on the escalating threats faced by these communities.

In response to remarks made by India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar regarding anti-India sentiments in Bangladesh, Bangladesh's Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain reaffirmed his country's commitment to maintaining strong bilateral ties based on mutual respect and reciprocal interests.

The VIF event brought global attention to the continuing plight of minorities in Bangladesh, urging policymakers, human rights advocates, and international organizations to take meaningful action.

# No Matter What: Mamata Banerjee's Takedown Of Yogi Adityanath On Kumbh

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who recently came under heavy criticism for her "Mrityu Kumbh" comment, today issued a strong rebuttal, specifically targeting Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his remarks. Banerjee defended herself, stating that her criticism had been "distorted" and turned into "complete lies."



"I will not get blisters from any abuses that Yogi Saheb hurls at me. I respect him as a Chief Minister," Mamata Banerjee said during a press conference. She also expressed concern about the lack of post-mortem certificates and death certificates for those who died in the incident in Uttar Pradesh. "We conducted post-mortems of the bodies that reached here. I don't know what happened in other states. And if you have announced compensation, you should give them the money," she added, referring to the deadly stampede at the Kumbh Mela, which led to at least 30

fatalities and more than 60 injuries.

Banerjee's remarks come after Yogi Adityanath's address in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, where he had sharply criticized critics of the Kumbh Mela. He made a comparison, saying, "Vultures got dead bodies. Pigs got filth... whereas sensitive people got a beautiful picture of relationships, traders got business, devotees got clean arrangements." His comments were met with

applause from the members of the Uttar Pradesh Assembly.

The West Bengal Chief Minister also used the opportunity to highlight her state's handling of large crowds during festivals, drawing parallels to the preparation required for events in Bengal, such as the Gangasagar Mela and Durga Puja. "One should always consider one's capacity. How many can go, how many can stay... preparations that are necessary even for a wedding

feast," she stated, adding that the "hype" surrounding the Kumbh Mela was unnecessary.

Banerjee reiterated that her original remarks had been misrepresented. "What they have been saying are untruths. Complete lies. I have never disrespected any religion in my life and will never do that," she stressed.

The Chief Minister also referred to the tragic fire at a Kolkata hospital and the swift actions of her government in managing the aftermath. "We do not sleep for days. We keep an eye on things. We plan minutely, else the people suffer," she said, emphasizing the need for meticulous planning and quick response in handling such incidents.

Her controversial "Mrityu Kumbh" remark, made in reference to the stampede, had stirred significant backlash from the BJP, particularly as it came at a time when the Opposition had already been critical of the handling of the Kumbh Mela disaster.



# Imran Khan orders PTI members holding govt jobs to relinquish party positions

- Ordered PTI members in government roles to step down.
- Junaid Akbar appointed as PTI's KP president, replacing Ali Amin Gandapur.
- Despite jail, Imran Khan continues to direct PTI's strategy.

TPN Correspondent | Islamabad

Imran Khan Orders PTI Members in Government Positions to Resign Imran Khan, the jailed founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has directed all party members serving in government positions to step down from their roles. The instructions were communicated through the PTI Secretary General, Salman Akram Raja, earlier this week. This move marks a significant step towards reorganizing the party, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) region, where party leadership changes have been ongoing.

According to PTI's Secretary General, the decision is aimed at providing Junaid Akbar, the newly appointed president of PTI's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter, the necessary space to restructure the party effectively. The party leader emphasized that this decision would grant Akbar a free hand in managing party affairs in the province,



which has been central to PTI's political operations.

The reshuffling of leadership began last month when Imran Khan made the decision to remove Ali Amin Gandapur, the former Chief Minister of KP, from his position as the provincial president of PTI. In his place, Khan appointed Junaid Akbar,

signaling a shift in the party's leadership dynamics at the provincial level. The move to reorganize PTI comes amid mounting challenges for the party, including internal disputes and external political pressures following Khan's imprisonment.

Imran Khan's instructions highlight his ongoing influence within the party, despite being incarcerated in Adiala jail. His efforts to realign PTI's leadership indicate his determination to maintain control over the party's direction during a turbulent period in Pakistani politics.

The development also sheds light on the strategic focus of the PTI leadership to stabilize and revitalize the party, particularly in regions where it has considerable support. The reshuffling in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reflects Khan's long-term vision for PTI's future political engagements and his attempts to reinforce his party's influence ahead of future elections.

# Donald Trump calls France 'Oldest Ally, Macron stresses shared vision for peace



TPN Correspondent | US

Former US President Donald Trump recently highlighted the deep-rooted historical ties between the United States and France, referring to France as "America's oldest ally." In a statement posted on X, Trump underscored the long-standing diplomatic relationship between the two nations, emphasizing their shared commitment to global peace, freedom, and prosperity. He acknowledged that France's support for the United States during the American Revolution marked the beginning of a cherished partnership that has been a force for good in the world.

Trump's remarks came at a time when global discussions around security, diplomacy, and economic collaboration are prominent. He reaffirmed the strength of the US-France alliance and its importance in addressing key global challenges. Trump's statement was a reminder of the historical significance of the relationship, which spans centuries of cooperation, including during world wars, diplomatic agreements, and economic partnerships.

French President Emmanuel Macron also reaffirmed the enduring bond between the two countries. In a statement, Macron expressed France's ongoing commitment to working with the United States in upholding peace and cooperation on the international stage. He emphasized that both nations share a long-standing dedication to global stability and continue to collaborate on key international issues such as NATO commitments, economic growth, and counterterrorism efforts.

The US-France alliance has its roots in the American Revolution, when France provided critical support to the American colonies. Over the years, this relationship has shaped global policies and reinforced democratic values. The two countries have stood together through wars, diplomatic negotiations, and economic ventures, with military cooperation and trade being central aspects of their partnership.

As the world faces evolving challenges, the US-France alliance remains a cornerstone of both nations' foreign policies. The recent statements from Trump and Macron serve to reinforce the commitment to maintaining a strong, peaceful, and prosperous relationship between the two countries. This partnership continues to be crucial in navigating the complexities of modern global affairs.

# South Korea's Yoon Impeachment Trial Wraps Up: What's Next?



TPN Correspondent | Seoul

The impeachment trial of South Korea's ousted President Yoon Suk Yeol is nearing its conclusion, capping weeks of political upheaval following his controversial declaration of martial law. The Constitutional Court's eight judges will soon decide whether to uphold the December parliamentary vote that removed Yoon from office. The key issue is whether Yoon's martial law declaration violated the constitution, and whether he demonstrated a genuine commitment to upholding it.

Experts predict that a verdict could be delivered by mid-March, with some drawing comparisons to past cases. For instance, former president Roh Moo-hyun was reinstated after a 14-day trial, while Park Geun-hye, removed in 2017, had her verdict in just 11 days. This has led to speculation that Yoon's case could follow a similar timeline.

Legal scholars largely agree that the court will likely uphold the impeachment. Experts argue that Yoon's refusal to cooperate with prosecutors and his handling of martial law make it difficult to justify his commitment to the constitution. Unlike Park's case, which involved multiple corruption issues, Yoon's trial is relatively straightforward, focusing solely on his declaration of martial law.

However, Yoon's legal troubles don't end with the impeachment trial. He faces charges of insurrection for his martial law declaration, with the potential for life imprisonment or even the death penalty if convicted. His criminal trial could stretch on for one to two years, with a possible heavy sentence if he is found guilty.

If Yoon is removed from office, South Korea would be required to hold fresh elections within 60 days. The current frontrunner in the polls is Lee Jae-myung, leader of the opposition Democratic Party. However, analysts caution that the political landscape remains fluid, especially given Lee's own legal challenges, including a suspended prison sentence for election law violations.

# As Trump Eyes Ukraine's Rare Metals, Putin Offers Him Russia's Reserve



TPN Correspondent | Washington, US

The United States and Ukraine are on the verge of finalizing a deal that would grant Washington a share of Kyiv's natural resource revenues, a proposal that has sparked significant tension between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Trump announced that Zelenskyy might visit the White House soon to sign the agreement, which has been at the center of the rift between the two leaders.

The deal, initially proposed by Ukraine as part of Zelenskyy's "victory plan" in September, aimed to offer business incentives to Trump in exchange for continued US security support. However, the latest draft of the agreement reportedly asks for 50% of Ukraine's mineral revenue without providing the security guarantees Ukraine desperately needs in its fight against Russia. Zelenskyy rejected an earlier draft, fearing the long-term financial burden it would place on future generations. Negotiations

between US and Ukrainian officials have since focused on finding a middle ground.

Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister, Olha Stefanishyna, confirmed that the two sides were in the final stages of discussions, with most key details settled. She emphasized the importance of completing the deal swiftly and hoped that both leaders would sign it soon. Despite more favorable terms for Ukraine in this version, the agreement still lacks the security commitments Kyiv has sought. The White House has made it clear that the deal would not guarantee future military aid or involve US personnel in the region. Meanwhile, Russia has proposed a similar offer to the US, suggesting that American companies could profit from Russia's vast natural resources, including rare earth metals in Russian-occupied Ukraine. President Vladimir Putin highlighted the opportunity for lucrative business in the region, further complicating the dynamics surrounding the natural resource deals in both Ukraine and Russia.

# Canada's New Visa Rules May Become A Nightmare For Indian Students, Workers

TPN Correspondent | Canada

Canada's recent changes to its immigration policies are expected to negatively affect thousands of foreign students, workers, and migrants, particularly from India. These new rules, which took effect in February, grant Canadian border officials broad powers to alter the visa status of students, workers, and migrants at any time, potentially leading to the cancellation of permits, visas, and even residency.

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations now give border personnel the authority to deny or cancel temporary resident documents, such as electronic travel authorizations (eTAs) and temporary resident visas (TRVs). This includes work permits and student visas. The new regulations also allow border



officials to cancel permits if they are not convinced that the individual will leave Canada when their autho-

rized stay expires, with the officer making the final judgment on the matter.

These regulations bring a level of uncertainty for tens of thousands of international students and workers in Canada, with Indians forming the largest group in both categories. Currently, over 420,000 Indian students are pursuing higher education in Canada. If a student, worker, or migrant is rejected at the port of entry, they will be sent back to their home country. If their permit is canceled while already in Canada, they will be required to leave by a specified date.

In addition to students and workers, Canada also experiences a significant influx of tourists from India, with more than 360,000 Indians having received travel visas in the first half of 2024 alone. These travelers are also subject to the new temporary permit regulations.



# Indian Stock Markets End Flat Amid Mixed Signals



during the session, market sentiment showed signs of stabilizing, as the India VIX dropped sharply to 13.75%, indicating reduced uncertainty and suggesting that the markets might stabilize in the coming days.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 74,454 in the previous session, opened at 74,440 and reached an intraday low of 74,400. It later climbed to an intraday high of 74,785 before closing at 74,602, marking a gain of 147 points. Meanwhile, the NSE Nifty opened at 22,516 and hit a low of 22,513 and a high of 22,625, ultimately closing at 22,547, down by 5 points. The Nifty Bank index fell 43 points, settling at 48,608.



**MURTHY NAIDU PAADAM**  
Stock Market Analyst  
+91 988 555 9709

Market breadth on the NSE favored sellers, with 1,117 stocks gaining and 1,717 losing. Of the 2,914 stocks traded, 12 companies reached 52-week highs, while 181 stocks touched 52-week lows. In terms of circuit limits, 100 stocks reached their upper circuit, and 86 touched the lower circuit.

Among the Nifty50 stocks, 19 companies recorded gains while 31 stocks

for the second consecutive day, bolstered by bullish ratings from brokerage houses. The rupee weakened by 50 paise against the dollar, settling at 87.20. Bharti Airtel shares saw a recovery after six consecutive days of losses, rising by 3% due to a deal with Ericsson. Jefferies issued a buy rating for Caffeine Technologies with a target price of Rs. 1310, and Motilal Oswal set a target of Rs. 1250 for 360 One.

Other notable movements included a rise in Vijaya Diagnostics' shares by 11%, while metal stocks like Hindalco, Nalco, and Vedanta faced selling pressure. Central Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra received approval to raise funds, while the Adani and Ambani groups each announced investments of Rs. 50,000 crore in Assam, signaling further economic interest in the region.

Domestic stock markets ended flat today, with benchmark indices starting the day with moderate gains before moving in a range-bound manner.

The volatility was primarily due to mixed signals from Asian markets, leading to profit-taking in several sectors. Despite some ups and downs

Mahindra & Mahindra shares gained

## India Imports €49 Billion Worth of Russian Oil in Third Year of Ukraine Invasion



India, the world's third-largest oil consumer and importer, purchased crude oil worth 49 billion euros from Russia in the third year of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, according to a recent report by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air. India, which traditionally relied on oil from the Middle East, significantly increased its imports of Russian crude after the invasion in February 2022.

This surge in Russian oil imports can be attributed to the steep discounts on Russian crude, a result of Western sanctions and some European nations halting purchases. As a result, India's imports of Russian oil grew

dramatically, rising from less than 1% of its total oil imports to around 40% in a short span of time.

The report highlights that Russia's dominance in new markets has solidified in the third year of the invasion. The three largest buyers of Russian fossil fuels—China, India, and Turkey—accounted for 74% of Russia's total revenues from fossil fuel exports. Specifically, China bought oil worth €78 billion, India €49 billion, and Turkey €34 billion.

India's imports of Russian oil showed an 8% year-on-year increase, underscoring the contin-

ued reliance on discounted Russian crude. Meanwhile, Russia's total global earnings from fossil fuels in the third year of the invasion reached 242 billion euros, adding to a cumulative total of 847 billion euros since the start of the war.

This trend marks a significant shift in global energy markets, with India emerging as a key buyer of Russian oil amid the ongoing geopolitical conflict. However, the growing reliance on Russian crude continues to raise concerns about the long-term implications for both global energy security and India's foreign policy.

## ICRA Predicts 7-8% Revenue Growth for India Inc in Q4

Domestic rating agency ICRA projected that Indian companies are likely to see a 7-8% revenue growth during the March quarter of the current fiscal year, driven by a revival in rural demand and increased government spending. However, the agency also highlighted that the private capital expenditure (capex) cycle is expected to remain subdued due to geopolitical uncertainties and a relatively weak outlook on merchandise exports from India.

ICRA noted that despite these challenges, certain sectors, particularly those receiving government support through production-linked incentive schemes, will continue to thrive. These include sunrise industries such as electronics, semiconductors, and electric vehicles (EVs), which are set to see increased investments.

The agency further mentioned that the recovery in operating profit margins (OPM) for India Inc. observed in the past quarter is likely to be sustained, with expectations of margins staying between 18.2-18.4%. This growth will be supported by rising demand, bolstered by improved consumer sentiments.



ICRA also emphasized the outlook for rural demand, which is expected to remain robust in the first half of CY2025. This will be supported by strong output from the kharif crops and a favorable forecast for the ongoing rabi season. However, the outlook for agriculture will depend on the arrival of a normal and well-distributed monsoon in 2025.

Urban demand, which has been weak in recent quarters, is anticipated to improve. This recovery will be driven by factors such as the significant income-tax relief in the Union Budget for 2025, monetary easing by the Reserve Bank of India, and expectations of a moderation in food inflation, which would aid discretionary consumption, according to Kinjal Shah, Senior Vice President and Co-Group Head of Corporate Ratings at ICRA.

## Adani Green Energy Secures 1,250 MW Energy Storage Project in UP

Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL), India's largest renewable energy company, has received a Letter of Award (LOA) from Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) for the development of a 1,250 MW energy storage capacity through Pumped Hydro Storage Projects (PSP). This project, named Panaura PSP, will be located in the Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh and is expected to be completed within the next six years. The project will have a minimum commitment period of 40 years, reinforcing AGEL's long-term focus on clean energy infrastructure.

This move is aligned with India's clean energy goals, which emphasize the need for large-scale utility storage projects to integrate renewable energy into the grid and provide consistent,

round-the-clock energy. The storage capacity will help manage the intermittent nature of renewable sources like solar and wind, making the grid more stable and efficient.

In line with this strategic goal, Adani Green Energy is expanding its portfolio to include energy storage solutions alongside its existing solar, wind, and hybrid projects. The company has ambitious plans to add over 5 GW of hydro PSP capacity by 2030. AGEL is already progressing with several pumped hydro storage projects, including a 500 MW project at the Chitravathi River in Andhra Pradesh, a 1,500 MW project at Tarali in Maharashtra, and an 1,800 MW project at Gandikota in Andhra Pradesh.

Hydro pumped storage is a mature,



cost-competitive, and scalable technology with significant potential. It works by using electricity generated from solar during the day to pump water to a higher elevation, which can then be released to generate electricity during peak demand at night. This process is not only sustainable but

also ensures grid stability and flexibility in energy management. Hydro PSPs are also known for their ability to provide frequency regulation and reserve generation, making them a key component of a resilient and robust energy infrastructure.

Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) is currently the largest renewable energy company in India, with a portfolio of 11.9 GW of renewable energy projects across 12 states. The company aims to achieve a 50 GW renewable capacity by 2030, in line with India's decarbonization objectives. AGEL is also developing the world's largest renewable energy plant at Khavda, Gujarat, with a target capacity of 30 GW. This project, set to cover 538 square kilometers, is five times larger than Paris.

AGEL is committed to sustainable growth, with its operating portfolio certified as water-positive for plants over 200 MW, single-use plastic-free, and zero waste-to-landfill. These efforts underline the company's dedication to supporting India's clean energy transition.





## Mahindra Scorpio N Carbon Edition Launched to Celebrate 2 Lakh Sales Milestone



Mahindra has achieved a major milestone with the record sale of 2 lakh units of its Scorpio N. To commemorate this achievement, the company has launched the new Scorpio N Carbon Edition, which offers a fresh look and premium features. Here's everything you need to know about the new variant:

### Engine and Performance

The Scorpio N Carbon retains the same engine options as the original Scorpio N: - A 2.0-litre mStallion TGD1 petrol engine that generates 203 HP of power and 370 Nm of torque (manual) and 380 Nm (automatic). - A 2.2-litre mHawk CRDi diesel engine delivering 175 HP and 400 Nm of torque.

### Exterior and Interior Features

-Exterior: The Scorpio N Carbon boasts a stunning metallic black theme complemented by one-on-tone dark treatment, smoked chrome accents, and black alloy wheels. It also gets dark Galvano-fin-

ished roof rails, enhancing its bold, stylish look.

Interior: Inside, the Scorpio N Carbon adopts a sleek blacked-out interior theme with premium upholstery and contrast deco stitching. Additionally, it comes with modern features like:

### Wireless charging

- Auto-dimming IRVM
- Dual-zone climate control
- Ventilated front seats
- 7-inch digital instrument cluster
- 8-inch touchscreen infotainment system
- 12-speaker Sony audio system

### Safety Features

The Scorpio N Carbon includes a comprehensive safety suite with features such as: Tyre pressure monitoring system, ISO Fix child seat anchorages, Hill hold and hill descent control, Driver drowsiness detection, Electronic stability control

Rear parking cameras and front/rear parking sensors

### Variants and Pricing

The Scorpio N Carbon is available in the Z8 and Z8 L variants. The pricing for the model starts at Rs 19,19,400 (ex-showroom), while the top-spec Scorpio N Carbon 4WD AT is priced at Rs 24,89,100.

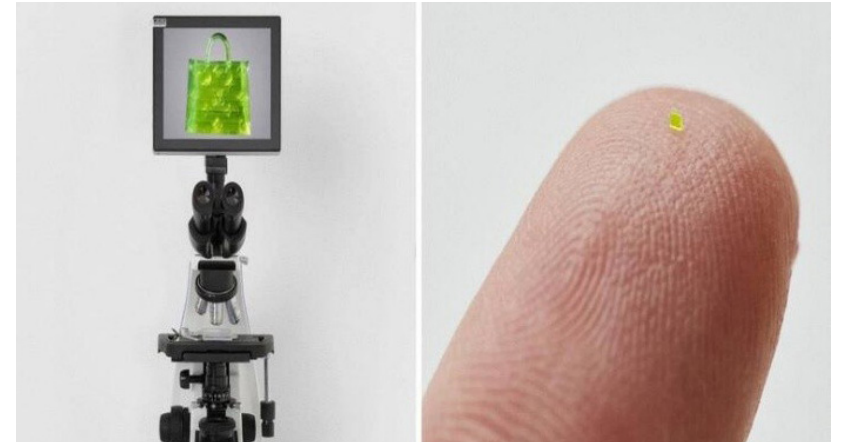
### Rivals

The Scorpio N Carbon goes head-to-head with other SUVs in the segment, including:

Tata Harrier  
Hyundai Alcazar  
MG Hector

Tata Safari  
With its striking design, powerful engine options, and premium features, the Scorpio N Carbon is poised to be a strong contender in the competitive SUV market.

## MSCHF Auctions World's Tiniest Handbag, It Needs a Microscope to Be Seen



Fashion enthusiasts who follow high-end brands like Hermes and Jacquemus are no strangers to the trend of miniature handbags. However, one US artist collective, MSCHF, has taken the concept to a whole new level. In a groundbreaking move, MSCHF is auctioning off a bag so tiny that it is barely visible to the naked eye. In fact, the purse is so small, you'll need a microscope to see it clearly.

This neon green handbag, designed to resemble Louis Vuitton's OnTheGo collection, is smaller than a grain of sea salt. The miniature accessory features tiny pockets that are no larger than a speck of dust, rendering it practically invisible without a magnifying lens. To make sure potential buyers can admire the minuscule details, the bag comes with its own microscope.

MSCHF's description of the bag adds to the allure: "Smaller than a grain of sea salt and narrow enough to pass through the eye of a needle, this is a purse so small you'll need a microscope to see it." The collective

goes on to explain that the bag represents the final frontier of bag miniaturization, with its diminutive size making it more of a brand symbol than a functional object.

The tiny handbag has already created a buzz on social media platforms, attracting attention from fashion lovers and collectors alike. The Instagram post showcasing the handbag has garnered over 78,000 likes and sparked a flurry of comments. Some users expressed amazement at the level of detail, while others joked about the idea of displaying the bag in a magnifying glass cabinet.

One user commented, "Actually incredible. I'd love to see how the absolute tiniest details were done." Another humorously added, "Imagine getting arrested for shoplifting a microscopic purse." With its eye-catching design and surreal size, the microscopic handbag has become a sensation and is expected to fetch a hefty price during the Paris auction, coinciding with the excitement of fashion week.

## Meet 'Protoclone The Synthetic Human That Walks, Moves And Can See Like Us



Clone Robotics, a Poland-based startup, has introduced its latest creation—a humanoid robot that moves with uncanny realism. The robot, named Protoclone, is designed with synthetic muscles beneath a transparent skin, allowing it to mimic human motion in a strikingly lifelike manner. The latest prototype was recently showcased in a chilling video that quickly captured the attention of social media users. In the video, Protoclone is seen hanging from the ceiling, its movements eerily fluid and human-like, resembling a character

straight out of a sci-fi film. The unsettling visuals are paired with haunting background music composed by Ludwig Göransson, which amplifies the robot's uncanny presence. The combination of the robot's realistic motions and the eerie soundtrack left viewers both fascinated and unnerved.

Protoclone's lifelike motion is achieved through a unique technology developed by Clone Robotics. The robot's frame and joints are designed to replicate natural human movement with extraordinary precision. At the core of Protoclone's design is the company's innovative artificial muscle system, Myofiber. Introduced in 2021, Myofiber uses musculotendon units that are strategically attached to anatomically accurate points on the robot's bones. This allows the robot to achieve highly realistic movement, closely resembling the motions of the human body.

The unveiling of Protoclone has sparked conversations about the potential of robots in mimicking human-like motions and their possible applications in various fields, including robotics, healthcare, and entertainment. However, the lifelike appearance of Protoclone also raises questions about the ethical and emotional impact of robots that resemble humans so closely. As technology continues to advance, the line between human and machine is becoming increasingly blurred, leaving society to grapple with both the potential and the unsettling consequences of such developments.

## IIT Madras Creates Concrete To Help Build Homes On The Red Planet



A team from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras, led by Dr. Piyush Chaunsali, Associate Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering, has made a significant breakthrough in extraterrestrial construction. The team, known as Extraterrestrial Manufacturing (ExTeM), has developed a unique type of concrete specifically designed for use on Mars. What sets this concrete apart is that it does not require water—a major challenge for future Mars colonization.

While studies have suggested that water may exist in small quantities in Mars' crust, no large, accessible sources have been found, making it difficult to plan long-term human settle-

ments. The new water-free concrete developed by ExTeM could be a game-changer in overcoming this limitation. The innovative concrete is strong, durable, and meets Earth's construction standards, thanks to a special compound that is mixed with sulphur—a material readily available on the Martian surface. Adithya Plato Sidharth, a postdoctoral researcher with ExTeM, explained in an interview with India Today that the team used sulphur-based compounds to create concrete that can withstand the harsh Martian environment. "We used a compound mixed with sulphur, which is abundant on Mars, to develop a concrete that matches Earth standards," said Sidharth.

This breakthrough could play a pivotal role in building sustainable infrastructure on Mars, as water-free concrete would eliminate the need for importing water or relying on scarce Martian resources. The development is part of ongoing research aimed at addressing the challenges of establishing human presence on Mars, focusing on utilizing local materials for construction. The innovative concrete is not only a technical achievement but could also pave the way for more efficient, resourceful colonization efforts on the Red Planet, allowing future generations to build habitats and other necessary structures without the constraints posed by the lack of water.

## 'Bahubali' Samosa Challenge, Offers Rs 71,000 For Eating A 12 Kg Samosa In 30 Mins



Chinese influencer Gu Xixi is making waves after revealing that she earned a staggering 3.03 lakh yuan (approximately Rs 35 Lakh) in a single day—all by simply lying in bed. The 25-year-old influencer, who operates a shop on Douyin (the Chinese equivalent of TikTok), shared the details of her impressive earnings between February 8 and 16. Over that period, Xixi raked in a total of 1.039 crore yuan (approximately Rs 12 Crore) on one platform, with a commission of around 27.9 lakh yuan (approximately Rs 3 Crore). On another platform, her sales reached 89.4 lakh yuan within a week. In a recent live stream, Xixi described her earnings as "hard-earned" and revealed an interesting twist—she claimed that

the more people criticize her, the more money she makes. "Today, I spent the entire day lying in bed, did nothing, and still made 11.6 lakh yuan in sales on my Douyin shop, with an estimated commission of 3.03 lakh yuan," she said. "The more you cannot stand seeing me doing well and the more you criticize me, the more I make."

Xixi, who has amassed a large following, made it clear that she doesn't just aim to earn a few hundred thousand yuan monthly. Her goal is far more ambitious: earning that much every single day. "It is not about earning hundreds of thousands of yuan per month; it is about earning hundreds of thousands of yuan per day. Understand?" she added.

Her unorthodox approach to business and success has garnered both admiration and criticism. While some are impressed by her entrepreneurial skills, others argue that such claims perpetuate unrealistic expectations. Regardless, Gu Xixi's rise in the influencer world demonstrates the growing power of social media platforms, where individuals can generate enormous income with innovative approaches.



## Bruised England, Afghanistan Eye Victory To Stay Afloat In Champions Trophy



tournament opener, failing to defend a 350-plus total against an Australian side missing key pacers. Their bowling unit lacked penetration, allowing an under-strength Aussie batting line-up to chase down the target with ease.

Afghanistan, known for their spin prowess, will look to exploit England's weakness against slow bowlers. Rashid Khan, Noor Ahmad, and Mohammad Nabi pose a serious threat, especially with England's batters showing inconsistency against spin in recent outings. England suffered a setback with all-rounder Brydon Carse ruled out due to injury, replaced by leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed to bolster their spin attack. However, their main concerns remain the form of opener Phil Salt and middle-order batter Harry Brook, both struggling for consistency.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan will aim to bounce back from a heavy 107-run loss to South Africa. While they have the talent, their challenge lies in adapting to the demands of the ODI format and executing their plans effectively against a vulnerable English side.

England and Afghanistan will battle for survival in the Champions Trophy as they face off in a crucial Group B match in Lahore on Wednesday. With South Africa and Australia already securing two points each, a defeat here would put the losing side on the brink of elimination.

England, once a dominant force in white-ball cricket, struggled in their

## Vidarbha Eye 3rd Title, Kerala Seek Historic Win in Final

Vidarbha will bank on their dominant form and home advantage as they take on a spirited Kerala in the Ranji Trophy final starting Wednesday. While Vidarbha, two-time champions, are aiming to reclaim the title after five years, Kerala are eyeing their maiden triumph in the prestigious tournament.

Led by Akshay Wadkar, Vidarbha have been the team to beat this season, winning eight of their nine matches and drawing one. They cruised through the knockouts, defeating Tamil Nadu by 198 runs in the quarterfinal and Mumbai by 80 runs in the semifinal. Having lost to Mumbai in last year's final, they are eager to make amends.

Yash Rathod has led their batting with 933 runs, supported by Wadkar, Karun Nair, Danish Malewar, and Dhruv Shorey. On the bowling front, 22-year-old Harsh Dubey has been sensational with 66 wickets, nearing the record for most wickets in a Ranji season.

Kerala, led by Sachin Baby, have shown immense resilience, advancing through the knockouts with thrilling first-innings lead wins over Jammu and Kashmir (by one run) and Gujarat (by two runs). Salman Nizar and Mohammed Azharuddeen have been Kerala's batting pillars, with Azharuddeen's 177 in



the semifinal standing out. Jalaj Saxena leads Kerala's bowling with 38 wickets, while former Vidarbha player Aditya Sarwate has taken 30 wickets, adding depth to their attack. With Vidarbha's experience and Kerala's fighting spirit, the final promises an intense battle for the coveted title.

## FIH Hockey Pro League Sam Ward's brace powers England to 3-2 win over India



England edged past India with a thrilling 3-2 victory in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2024/25 at the Kalinga Stadium on Monday, thanks to a brilliant brace from Sam Ward.

England struck first through James Payton (15'), but India responded quickly with an equalizer from Abhishek (18'). However, Ward took charge, netting twice

(19', 28') to put England ahead 3-1. Sukhjeet Singh (39') pulled one back for India, but England's resolute defense, led by goalkeeper James Mazarelo, denied them a late equalizer.

Despite India's relentless pressure in the final quarter and a last-minute penalty corner, England held firm to seal the victory.

## Rachin Ravindra's century powers New Zealand into CT semis

Rachin Ravindra anchored New Zealand's chase with a brilliant century, guiding his team to a five-wicket victory over Bangladesh and securing a spot in the Champions Trophy semifinals. The win also confirmed India's progression while eliminating hosts Pakistan and Bangladesh from the tournament.

Chasing 237, New Zealand suffered an early setback, losing Will Young and Kane Williamson for just 15 runs. However, Ravindra steadied the innings with a crucial 112 off 105 balls, hitting 12 fours and a six. His 129-run stand with Tom Latham (55 off 76 balls) ensured the Black Caps completed the chase in 46.1 overs.

Earlier, Michael Bracewell was instrumental in restricting Bangladesh to 236/9, claiming 4/26 in 10 overs. Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto top-scored for Bangladesh with 77, but a slow middle-order



and 86 dot balls in the first 21 overs hurt their total.

Despite some early breakthroughs by Taskin Ahmed and Nahid Rana, Bangladesh couldn't prevent New Zealand's controlled chase. The result sees New Zealand and India advance to the semifinals, while Pakistan and Bangladesh bow out of the competition.

## Praggnanadhaa Hot Favourite To Win Prague Masters



Fresh off his thrilling victory at the Tata Steel Masters, Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa is the hot favorite to win the Prague Masters, starting Wednesday. The Indian prodigy, who recently edged out World Champion D Gukesh in a tiebreak battle, aims to continue his strong form in this nine-round all-play-all event.

Chinese GM Wei Yi leads the seedings, with Praggnanandhaa second, followed by Vietnam's Le Quang Liem and Germany's Vincent Keymer. Making his debut in elite chess, Aravindh Chithambaram is seeded fourth,

thanks to his consistent rise in ratings, currently standing at 2730 in live ratings.

Other top players include Dutch GM Anish Giri, Czech veteran David Navara, and American GM Sam Shankland. According to statistical analysis, Praggnanandhaa holds a 14.98% chance of winning, ahead of Wei Yi at 10.52%.

Meanwhile, Divya Deshmukh will compete in the Challengers' section, adding to India's strong presence. The tournament kicks off Wednesday after the drawing of lots on Tuesday.

## IOA sets up Adhoc Committee to handle BFI, conduct elections

With the tenure of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) office-bearers ending on February 2 and elections delayed due to legal disputes, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has constituted a five-member Adhoc Committee to manage its affairs and oversee the election process.

The committee includes senior boxer Shiva Thapa, along with administrators Madhukant Pathak, Rajesh Bhandari, Dr. D.P. Bhatt, and Virendra Singh Thakur. The panel has been tasked with addressing grievances with-

in the boxing community, ensuring athlete participation in international events, and expediting the BFI elections.

IOA President PT Usha stated that the delay in elections had created administrative instability, prompting numerous complaints from athletes and officials. She emphasized that the committee would operate independently, maintain transparency, and ensure due process in conducting the elections. The order has come into immediate effect.



## Sophie Ecclestone shines as UP Warriorz beat RCB in WPL's first-ever Super Over

In a thrilling contest, UP Warriorz edged past Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the first-ever Super Over of the Women's Premier League (WPL) on Monday, thanks to a stunning all-round performance by Sophie Ecclestone.

RCB, after being sent to bat, posted a strong 180/6, driven by Ellyse Perry's unbeaten 90 off 56 balls and Danni Wyatt-Hodge's 57. Ecclestone, despite going wicketless with figures of 4-0-29-0, made a crucial impact with the bat, scoring 33 off 19 balls to take the match into the Super Over.

A dramatic finish UP Warriorz, chasing 181, lost wickets at regular intervals. Kiran Navgire (24) and Dinesh Vrida (14) gave them a promising start, but RCB's bowlers kept striking back. Deepti Sharma (25 off 13) and Shweta Sehrawat (31 off 25) kept UP's hopes alive, but Perry and Sneha Rana (3/27) ensured the

game went down to the wire. Needing 18 off the last over, Ecclestone smashed Renuka Singh for two sixes and a four, leveling the scores before getting run out on the penultimate ball. UP Warriorz were bowled out for 180, pushing the match into a Super Over.

Super Over showdown UP Warriorz managed just eight runs in the Super Over, bowled by Kim Garth. With RCB needing nine to win, Ecclestone stepped up with the ball, conceding only four runs to seal a historic win for UP Warriorz.







## Kalyan's Inner Circle Actively Planning Akira's Debut



Speculation surrounding Akira Nandan's film debut continues to gain traction, especially with his frequent public appearances alongside his father, Pawan Kalyan. However, reports suggest that fans may have to wait a little longer before witnessing Akira's transformation into "Junior Powerstar."

Sources indicate that Pawan Kalyan's close associates, including Trivikram Srinivas, producer Naga Vamsi, and art director Anand Sai, are actively involved in planning Akira's debut. Interestingly, Pawan himself is reportedly the driving force behind these discussions and has influenced Akira's mindset regarding a career in cinema. Until recently, Akira was often seen with his mother,

Renu Desai, and had shown interest in pursuing a career in music. He had even enrolled in formal training for the same. However, his focus has now shifted toward acting, leading to intense preparation, including acting training under renowned coach Vizag Satyanand, with future plans for martial arts and dance. With uncertainty surrounding Pawan Kalyan's film commitments post-OG, Hari Hara Veera Mallu, and Ustaad Bhagat Singh, the actor-politician is said to be prioritizing his son's launch before shifting his full focus to politics ahead of the general elections. If all goes as planned, top production houses are expected to compete for Akira's grand debut. The film's release, with anticipation building over this

## Aadar Jain and Alekha Advani's Wedding Kareena, Ranbir, and Alia's Heartfelt Moments Captured



Aadar Jain and Alekha Advani's fairytale wedding continues to make headlines, with new pictures from their intimate ceremony surfacing online. The couple, who tied the knot in a Christian ceremony on February 21, 2025, in Goa, has been sharing glimpses of their celebrations on social media.

In the latest set of pictures, Aadar is seen posing with Kareena Kapoor, Karisma Kapoor, and Saif Ali Khan, along with his parents, Reema Jain and Manoj Jain. Another snapshot captures Ranbir Kapoor, Alia Bhatt, and Neetu Kapoor, while Riddhima Kapoor Sahni and

Kareena are also seen sharing a special moment with the newlyweds. Aadar and Alekha, who began dating in 2023, got engaged in September last year, followed by a roka ceremony in November. Before Alekha, Aadar was in a relationship with actress Tara Sutaria, but the two eventually parted ways.

Aadar Jain, the son of Raj Kapoor's daughter Rima Jain, made his Bollywood debut with Qaidi Band in 2017 and was last seen in Hello Charlie (2021). Meanwhile, Alekha Advani is the founder of the wellness brand Way Well.



## 97th Academy Awards Star-Studded Performances and A-List Presenters Set the Stage

The 97th Academy Awards are gearing up for a dazzling night filled with electrifying performances and Hollywood's biggest stars gracing the stage. The Oscars, set to take place on March 2, 2025, will be hosted by comedian Conan O'Brien and broadcast live on ABC and Hulu.

Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo, stars of the Wicked film adaptation, will bring a touch of Oz to the ceremony with a special live performance. Global K-pop icon Lisa, from Blackpink and The White Lotus, is also set to perform, along with rap sensation Doja Cat, legendary actress-musician Queen

Latifah, and rising star Raye. Adding to the spectacle, the Los Angeles Master Chorale will deliver a grand musical segment.

This year's Oscars will take a unique approach by forgoing live performances of Best Original Song nominees. Instead, viewers will be treated to behind-the-scenes insights into the songwriting process, offering a deeper look at the creative minds behind the music.

An impressive lineup of presenters is also set to take the stage. Last year's acting winners—Cillian Murphy, Emma Stone, Robert Downey Jr., and Da'Vine Joy Randolph—

will return to present awards, joined by a star-studded roster that includes Joe Alwyn, Ana de Armas, Halle Berry, Penélope Cruz, Willem Dafoe, Lily-Rose Depp, Elle Fanning, Whoopi Goldberg, Selena Gomez, Goldie Hawn, Scarlett Johansson, John Lithgow, Connie Nielsen, Amy Poehler, June Squibb, Ben Stiller, Oprah Winfrey, and Bowen Yang.

With an exciting mix of performances, tributes, and Hollywood's biggest names, the 97th Academy Awards promise an unforgettable night celebrating cinema at its finest.

## Yami Gautam in Talks for Multiple Projects Across Genres



Bollywood actress Yami Gautam, who is currently basking in the success of Dhoom Dhaam on Netflix, is reportedly in discussions for multiple upcoming projects spanning various genres.

A source close to the actress revealed that Yami's growing success has made her a preferred choice for filmmakers, as she continues to deliver powerful performances. "She has been very selective about her projects, ensuring strong scripts and compelling narratives. Currently, she is in talks for more than four films, all of which showcase her versatility," the source said.

Following the success of OMG 2 (2023), Article 370 (2024), and now Dhoom Dhaam (2025), Yami has solidified her reputation as a bankable star. Her performances in Bala (2019), Lost (2022), and A Thursday (2022) were widely praised, with critics lauding her ability to carry female-centric and socially relevant films.

Dhoom Dhaam, directed by Rishab Seth and produced by Aditya Dhar, was released on Netflix on February 14, 2025, and has been receiving positive feedback. As she gears up for her next ventures, fans can expect Yami to take on diverse and impactful roles once again.

## NTR Begins Promotions for Devara's Japanese Release

After the massive success of RRR in Japan, Jr NTR is now gearing up to expand his stardom further with the Japanese release of Devara Part 1. The film is set to hit Japanese screens on March 28, 2025, and ahead of its release, NTR has already begun promotions. The actor, who gained significant popularity among Japanese audiences after RRR became the highest-grossing Indian film in Japan—surpassing Rajinikanth's Muthu—is currently giving interviews to Japanese media. He is also scheduled to visit Japan on March 22 to actively promote the film.

Directed by Koratala Siva, Devara features Janhvi Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan in key roles. The film, which was originally released on September 27, 2024, turned out to be a major box office success. Fans are eager to see if it can recreate the same magic in Japan.

On the work front, Jr NTR has a busy lineup with War 2, NTRNeel, and Devara 2. While War 2 is expected to release later this year, NTRNeel recently went on floors. The actor is likely to start Devara



2 after wrapping up his current commitments.

## SC Grants Relief to Dil Raju in Mr. Perfect Copyright Case



Producer Dil Raju has received relief from the Supreme Court in the copyright case filed against his 2011 film Mr. Perfect. The apex court has put a stay on the City Civil Court's order, which had directed action against him over alleged copyright infringement.

The case was initially filed in 2017 by writer Mummudi Syamala Devi, who accused Dil Raju of copying the storyline of her novel Naa Manasu Ninnu Kore. Following her complaint, the Madhapur Police registered a copyright case against the producer. After hearing arguments and examining the evidence, the City Civil Court had

ruled in favor of the writer and ordered action against Dil Raju.

Challenging this decision, Dil Raju approached the Supreme Court seeking a stay on the lower court's order. On Monday, a bench comprising Justice JB Pardiwala and Justice R Mahadevan took up the case and, after hearing the arguments, stayed the City Civil Court's orders. The next hearing has been scheduled for two weeks later.

Mr. Perfect, directed by Dasarath, starred Prabhas, Kajal Aggarwal, and Taapsee Pannu in lead roles, with music composed by Devi Sri Prasad.