



**Weather Forecast**

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

# Kejriwal's Rajya Sabha Move on Cards

**AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjeev Arora to contest the Ludhiana West bypoll.**

**His resignation could pave the way for Arvind Kejriwal's Rajya Sabha entry.**

**If Arora wins, he is likely to get a ministry in the Punjab government.**

**AAP denies Kejriwal's move to the Upper House, but speculation remains.**



**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has nominated its Rajya Sabha MP Sanjeev Arora for the upcoming Ludhiana West bypoll, a move that could open the door for Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal to enter the Rajya Sabha. The seat fell vacant after the accidental death of AAP MLA Gurpreet Gogi last month. If Arora wins the bypoll, he will have to resign from the Rajya Sabha, triggering speculation that Kejriwal, who lost his Delhi Assembly membership after his recent electoral defeat, could be nominated to take his place. However, AAP has dismissed such reports.

With this strategic move, Kejriwal appears to have ensured a win-win situation for himself and the party. If Arora secures victory, he is expected to be rewarded with a ministerial position in the Punjab government, while Kejriwal could gain a political revival through Rajya Sabha entry.

**Who is Sanjeev Arora?**

Arora (61) is a businessman-turned-politician with a strong background in real estate, exports, and philanthropy. He leads Ritesh Properties and Industries Limited (RPIL) and has been active in healthcare initiatives,

founding the Krishna Pran Breast Cancer Charitable Trust after losing his parents to cancer. His contributions to industry, healthcare, and cricket administration earned him a state award in 2018 from then Punjab CM Captain Amarinder Singh. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 2022 and is currently one of AAP's seven MPs from Punjab. While AAP continues to deny Kejriwal's Rajya Sabha nomination, the developments suggest that the party chief is tactically positioning himself for a comeback while strengthening AAP's hold in Punjab.

# Mohan Singh Bisht Elected Dy Speaker of Delhi Assembly



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Six-time BJP MLA Mohan Singh Bisht was elected as the Deputy Speaker of the Delhi Assembly on Thursday after Chief Minister Rekha Gupta proposed his name. The motion was seconded by Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa, while Gajender Singh Yadav backed the second motion put forth by Anil Kumar Sharma. A veteran BJP leader, Bisht (67) recently won from Mustafabad, defeating AAP's Adeel Ahmad Khan by over 17,000 votes. Previously, he represented Karawal Nagar

from 1998 to 2015 and reclaimed the seat in 2020. The election comes as the maiden session of the eighth Delhi Assembly is underway, following the BJP's landslide victory in the February 5 elections. The party secured 48 out of 70 seats, bringing an end to AAP's decade-long rule, while AAP was reduced to 22 seats and Congress failed to secure any. With Bisht's election, the BJP continues to consolidate its position in the newly-formed Delhi government, as key leadership roles are being filled to steer the administration.

# Atishi Sits on Dharna as 21 Suspended AAP MLAs Denied Entry Into Delhi Assembly

MLAs Denied Entry Into Delhi Assembly

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Leader of Opposition Atishi staged a protest outside the Delhi Assembly on Thursday, condemning the suspension of 21 AAP MLAs by Speaker Vijender Gupta. She alleged that the ruling BJP was using its authority to suppress the opposition's voice.



"This is happening for the first time in the history of the country that elected representatives are being denied entry to a legislature," Atishi told IANS. She further claimed that despite repeated demands, the security staff failed to provide a written copy of the Speaker's order barring entry to the suspended MLAs. Initially, the MLAs were suspended for three sittings on Tuesday, but on Thursday, the Assembly secretariat indicated that the suspension would extend for the entire session, likely until March 3. The controversy stems from Tuesday's Assembly proceedings, when AAP legislators were suspended for protesting the alleged removal of B.R. Ambedkar and Shaheed Bhagat Singh's portraits from the office of Chief Minister

Rekha Gupta. Atishi accused the BJP of being "afraid of the name of Baba Saheb Ambedkar." The BJP, however, dismissed AAP's allegations, calling the suspension justified. Delhi Minister Parvesh Verma asserted, "This is just the beginning. Many firsts will happen in this new Assembly because AAP did nothing constructive in the past 10 years." Defending the action, BJP MLA Kailash Gahlot reminded that during AAP's tenure, BJP MLA O.P. Sharma was suspended for an entire session. "Now, AAP has no moral right to complain," he said. With AAP accusing BJP of suppressing dissent and BJP calling AAP's protest a political stunt, tensions continue to escalate in the newly constituted Delhi Assembly.

# Delhi's Najafgarh To Become Nahargarh?

BJP MLA urged renaming Najafgarh to Nahargarh, citing King Nahar Singh's legacy.

Neelam Pehalwan claimed the name change would restore its pre-Mughal identity.

BJP MLA Anil Sharma sought to rename Mohammadpur as Madhavpur.

The proposals were submitted in the Delhi Assembly, seeking official approval.



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

BJP MLA Neelam Pehalwan, representing Najafgarh, on Thursday demanded the renaming of the constituency to Nahargarh, arguing that the change would honor the legacy of King Nahar Singh, a prominent figure in the 1857 revolt. Addressing the Delhi Assembly, Pehalwan stated, "Najafgarh faced oppression under Mughal rule, especially during the reign of Alam II. During the revolt of 1857, Raja Nahar Singh fought and brought the Najafgarh region into Delhi's territory. It is only fitting that we honor his legacy by restoring the original name of the area." Pehalwan asserted that the people of Najafgarh have been advocating for the name change for a long time. "I have reached this position as the hope of the people of Najafgarh, and my priority is to raise their voice. The people of my con-

stituency have high expectations that this Assembly will support our demand," she said. She further alleged that Mughal ruler Aurangzeb had renamed the area, erasing its historical identity. "Najafgarh has a rich heritage, and its name should reflect its true history rather than the legacy of Mughal rule," Pehalwan added. The move to rename Najafgarh comes as part of a larger push by BJP leaders to restore what they call "historical accuracy" by renaming places that, in their view, were changed under Mughal rule. "We have been trying for a long time to rename Najafgarh to Nahargarh. Even the then MP Parvesh Verma had raised this issue, but it remained unresolved. This is an important step for the people of Najafgarh, who have suffered greatly in the past," she said. Meanwhile, another BJP MLA, Anil Shar-

ma, representing R.K. Puram, also submitted a proposal in the Delhi Assembly seeking the renaming of Mohammadpur to Madhavpur. While details of this proposal remain limited, Sharma's demand aligns with the BJP's larger efforts to rename places linked to Mughal-era figures. The demand for renaming Najafgarh has sparked political debate, with opposition parties criticizing the BJP's focus on name changes rather than governance issues. However, Pehalwan insisted that the name change is not just symbolic but deeply significant to the people of her constituency. As the Delhi Assembly continues its sessions, it remains to be seen whether the BJP's push for renaming these localities gains momentum or faces resistance from the opposition.

# Delhi Govt to Probe 'Sheesh Mahal' Spending Under AAP: Parvesh Verma

Govt to investigate spending on Kejriwal's residence

BJP alleges misuse of funds for luxury renovations

Orders repairs on key Barapullah route

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# Delhi gone, all AAP eyes now on Punjab



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## Will DU release info on PM Modi's Bachelor's degree? Delhi HC reserves order on plea

- DU's appeal against CIC order on PM Modi's degree.
- Argues records are private, not for public curiosity.
- Directed DU to disclose 1978 BA exam details.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Thursday reserved its verdict on Delhi University's (DU) appeal challenging the Central Information Commission (CIC) order, which directed the university to disclose information about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bachelor's degree. The case arose when an RTI application sought details about the Prime Minister's degree, which had been conferred by DU in 1978.

DU, in its plea, requested the court to set aside the CIC's order, but also clarified that it had no objection to showing the records to the court. "The university has no objection in showing the record to the court. There is a degree from 1978, Bachelor of Arts," DU's counsel, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, told the court.

Justice Sachin Datta, after hearing the arguments from both sides, concluded the proceedings, stating, "Arguments heard. Judgment reserved."



In a previous hearing, DU argued that it held the information in a fiduciary capacity and that the RTI Act was not meant for what they termed "mere curiosity." The university claimed that there was no public interest involved in revealing such private details, thus questioning the validity of the RTI request. It further argued that the RTI Act was being reduced to a "joke" as the request sought records of all students who passed the BA exam in 1978, not just those pertaining to the Prime Minister.

The case centers on an RTI application filed by Neeraj, who sought the details of all stu-

dents who cleared the 1978 BA examination. In its December 21, 2016 order, the CIC allowed the inspection of records, rejecting DU's argument that the information was third-party personal data. The CIC directed the university to facilitate the inspection of the register containing details of all students who passed the 1978 exam, including names, fathers' names, roll numbers, and marks, and provide a certified copy free of cost.

The final judgment on this matter is awaited from the Delhi High Court.

## Railways operated more than 16,000 trains operated during Maha Kumbh: Vaishnav

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav announced on Thursday that the Indian Railways operated more than 16,000 trains for the Maha Kumbh, transporting approximately five crore devotees to the holy pilgrimage in Prayagraj. Vaishnav, who visited the region to congratulate railway workers for their exceptional efforts during the event, highlighted the massive scale of the operation.



Comparing the current Kumbh to the last one in 2019, Vaishnav noted that in 2019, around 4,000 trains were operated. However, this year, the plan was to run more than three times that number, and in fact, four times as many trains were deployed. He emphasized that meticulous planning and hard work over the past two-and-a-half years ensured the success of the transportation effort.

He expressed his gratitude to railway workers, saying, "4.5 to 5 crore passengers were brought to the Maha Kumbh through more than 16,000 trains and were taken to their destinations. I would like to thank all the railway workers who worked together."

The Minister praised the collaborative efforts of both the state and central government departments, as well as the railway employees, for ensuring the smooth functioning of the logistics for the event. "The biggest achieve-

ment of this Maha Kumbh is that all the departments of the State and the Centre and the employees of the railways worked together. In this way, if we all become one, then no one can defeat us," Vaishnav added.

Vaishnav also mentioned that approximately Rs 5,000 crore was invested by the railways for the Maha Kumbh preparations. This included the construction of over 21 flyovers and underpasses, along with a new bridge over the River Ganga. Additionally, holding areas were set up at every station, and new foot over bridges were built to enhance passenger convenience.

The Maha Kumbh, which began on January 13, concluded on February 26, marking the successful culmination of extensive efforts by the railways and various other departments.

## At 19.5 Degrees, Delhi Records Warmest February In 74 Years

Delhi Records Warmest February Night in 74 Years



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi experienced its warmest February night in 74 years on Thursday, February 27, 2025, with the minimum temperature at Safdarjung reaching 19.5°C. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), this marks the highest minimum temperature ever recorded for the month of February between 1951 and 2025. Data prior to 1951 is unavailable for comparison.

The previous record for the warmest February night was 19°C, observed on February 25, 2015. Other notable high minimum temperatures in February include 18.6°C in 1973, 18.5°C on February 20, 2015, and 18.0°C in 1988, all of which rank among the highest for the month in historical records.

On Thursday, Delhi also saw a cloudy sky, with the maximum temperature recorded at 25°C, which was 1.1°C below the average for this time of year. This follows a warmer-than-usual Wednesday, when the city recorded its highest maximum temperature of the season at 32.4°C.

Mahesh Palawat, Vice President of Skymet Weather, indicated that due to the cloudy weather and light drizzle, the minimum temperature is expected to drop once again from today, and remain stable until March 3 or 4. A new western disturbance is forecasted for the first week of March, which, along with snowfall in the hills, is expected to change wind patterns in the region.

Looking ahead, Palawat stated that the winter season in Delhi is likely to end around March 10, after which atmospheric pressure will rise, and temperatures will stabilize.

The weather department has predicted a thunderstorm with rain on Friday, with temperatures expected to be around 23°C for the maximum and 16°C for the minimum.

The air quality in the national capital was recorded in the "poor" category, with an AQI of 215 at 4 PM, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). An AQI between 201 and 300 is categorized as "poor."

## Supreme Court Rules Anticipatory Bail Applicable to GST and Customs Laws

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a landmark judgment on Thursday, the Supreme Court ruled that the provision of anticipatory bail applies to offenses under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Act and Customs Act. The Court held that individuals can seek pre-arrest bail under these laws, even in the absence of a First Information Report (FIR).

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Justices MM Sundresh, and Bela M Trivedi delivered the ruling, which came after reserving judgment on May 16, 2024, on a set of petitions challenging provisions under the GST and Customs Acts. The petitions argued that the penal provisions in these laws were incompatible with



the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Constitution of India.

In its judgment, the Supreme Court emphasized that the provisions of the CrPC, along with the Bharatiya Nagarik Surak-

sha Sanhita (BNSS), relating to anticipatory bail, would apply to those facing charges under the GST and Customs Acts. The Court clarified that individuals under investigation for offenses under these acts are entitled to seek anticipatory bail, even

before an FIR has been filed against them.

This ruling significantly expands the scope of anticipatory bail, allowing individuals facing arrest for potential offenses under the GST and Customs Acts to move the courts for pre-arrest relief. The detailed judgment outlining the rationale behind the ruling is yet to be released.

The lead petition in this matter was filed by Radhika Agarwal in 2018, which prompted the Court to consider whether anticipatory bail provisions under the CrPC should extend to individuals charged under the GST and Customs laws. This verdict is expected to have wide-ranging implications on the application of anticipatory bail in economic offenses.

## Sam Pitroda's Alleged IIT Lecture Disruption Claim Debunked by Education Ministry

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Veteran Congress leader Sam Pitroda has found himself in the midst of controversy following a claim about a disrupted lecture at an 'Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)' in Ranchi. The issue arose when the Indian government fact-checked Pitroda's assertion and clarified that there is no IIT in Ranchi.

The Education Ministry swiftly responded with a statement on Wednesday, correcting Pitroda's mistake, explaining that Ranchi houses the Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT), not an IIT. The ministry also revealed that there was no record of Pitroda delivering a lecture at IIIT-Ranchi, either in person or virtually. It dismissed his claims about hacker-led disruptions as "baseless and reckless," further asserting that such alle-



gations damage the reputation of a prestigious institution.

The ministry emphasized that institutions like IITs and IIITs are founded on "merit, hard work, and achievement," and they deserve better than to be tarnished by "uninformed statements." In addition to debunking Pitroda's claims, the Education Ministry issued a stern warning, stating

that any attempt to damage the reputation of premier educational institutions would face legal consequences.

This controversy stemmed from Pitroda's comments during a podcast on February 22, shared via his X (formerly Twitter) account. While discussing the relevance of Mahatma Gandhi, Pitroda claimed that during his lecture at the "Ranchi IIT," a hacker disrupted the event by displaying inappropriate content. He expressed concerns about the state of freedom of speech in a democracy, calling into question the fairness of the incident.

The BJP responded harshly to Pitroda's remarks, labeling them "reprehensible" and "disgusting." The party accused him of deliberately attempting to tarnish the reputation of IITs and demanded an apology from Pitroda. Additionally, the BJP urged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and the party to take action against Pitroda if they did not agree with his statements.

## Delhi Govt to Probe 'Sheesh Mahal' Spending Under AAP: Parvesh Verma



**-Govt to investigate spending on Kejriwal's residence  
-BJP alleges misuse of funds for luxury renovations  
-Orders repairs on key Barapullah route**

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi minister Parvesh Verma announced an investigation into the alleged misuse of government funds for renovating former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's official residence at 6, Flagstaff Road. Dubbed "Sheesh Mahal" by the BJP, the bungalow

has been at the center of controversy, with allegations of extravagant spending under the previous AAP government.

Verma, who defeated Kejriwal in the recent assembly elections, stated that authorities would examine the expenses incurred in reconstructing the Chief Minister's resi-

dence and office. He questioned the approvals granted for the renovations and vowed transparency in the probe.

The BJP, which ousted AAP from power earlier this month, has accused Kejriwal of using public money for luxury additions to the bungalow. Verma emphasized that the investigation aims to determine the extent of spending and whether due process was followed.

Additionally, Verma, now the PWD Minister, visited Defence Colony to inspect ongoing infrastructure projects. He reviewed a damaged culvert that had been in disrepair for two years, causing road closures and traffic congestion. He directed officials to speed up the tender process and assured residents that repairs would begin by April.

Highlighting the importance of the route leading to Barapullah, Verma criticized the previous AAP government for neglecting the project, which led to a doubling of its original cost. He accused Kejriwal's ministers of failing to visit the site in the past decade, further blaming mismanagement for infrastructure delays.

The probe into the "Sheesh Mahal" controversy marks another political flashpoint between the BJP and AAP, as the new government moves to scrutinize past expenditures.

## Yogi Adityanath announces salary hike, bonus for Maha Kumbh sanitation workers



TPN Correspondent | PRAYAGRAJ

On Thursday, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced a special bonus and salary hike for sanitation workers in recognition of their dedicated efforts during the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. As a token of appreciation for their hard work, all sanitation workers involved in the event will receive an additional bonus of Rs 10,000. The bonus will be credited to their accounts starting in April.

In a significant move to improve the welfare of sanitation workers, the Yogi Adityanath government also hiked their monthly salary. Starting in April, sanitation workers across the state will receive a minimum salary of Rs 16,000 per month, a significant increase from their previous pay of Rs 9,000 to Rs 11,000 per month. This salary hike will be applicable statewide, benefiting thousands of sanitation workers.

Additionally, healthcare workers who served during the Maha Kumbh will be provided with health insurance coverage of Rs 5 lakh, further highlighting the gov-

ernment's commitment to the well-being of those who contributed to the event.

The successful execution of the Maha Kumbh also saw Uttar Pradesh setting a Guinness World Record for the largest coordinated cleanliness drive. CM Yogi Adityanath, alongside Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, received the prestigious award from Guinness World Records in recognition of the state's efforts in maintaining cleanliness during the massive event.

The Maha Kumbh concluded on February 26, 2025, with a final holy dip on the occasion of Mahashivratri. A record-breaking 66.30 crore devotees participated in the religious congregation. Despite the massive turnout, the event saw no reports of crime or incidents, with the Chief Minister proudly stating that the opposition couldn't find any flaws, despite their attempts to spread misinformation.

The Maha Kumbh was marked by six special bathing dates, including three 'Amrit Snan' or auspicious baths.

## 'BJP enrolling fake voters from other states with EC's help': Mamata

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of enrolling fake voters from other states in the electoral rolls, allegedly with the help of the Election Commission (EC). Banerjee warned that if corrective actions are not taken, she would launch an indefinite dharna (protest) outside the EC office to demand the removal of these fake electors.

Speaking at a Trinamool Congress (TMC) conference, Banerjee questioned the appointment of Gyanesh Kumar as the Chief Election Commissioner, alleging that the BJP was attempting to influence the constitutional body. She claimed, "How the BJP is manipulating the voter list with the blessings of the Election Commission is very much clear."

Banerjee further stated that she was willing to replicate the same determination she showed during the 2006 anti-land acquisition movement, in which she conducted a 26-day hunger strike. She emphasized that the TMC would not allow the BJP to manipulate voter rolls and would not let "outsiders" dominate the elections in Bengal.

The Chief Minister also pointed out that the BJP had previously used similar tactics in Delhi and Maharashtra, where fake voters



from states like Haryana and Gujarat were allegedly enrolled to manipulate election outcomes. She warned that the BJP would attempt the same strategy in Bengal, but vowed that the TMC would not let this happen.

"If the BJP wins elections in Bengal through fake voters, it will not be acceptable," Banerjee said. She emphasized that her party would actively identify and challenge these fake entries in the voter lists. Banerjee's remarks come as both the ruling TMC and opposition BJP gear up for the upcoming 2026 West Bengal Assembly elections, with tensions running high in the state's political landscape.

Her accusations against the BJP and the Election Commission have intensified the ongoing political battle, as the TMC prepares for a fierce electoral contest.

## I Apologise For Being Unable To Speak Tamil : Amit Shah Amid Language Row



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Amid ongoing discussions regarding the imposition of Hindi in Tamil Nadu, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday apologized for his inability to speak Tamil, calling it the "world's oldest language." Shah made this remark while addressing the special Maha Shivratri celebrations held at the Isha Foundation in Coimbatore.

During his speech, Shah referred to the event as 'Bhakti ka Mahakumbh' (Maha Kumbh of devotion) and extended his wishes for Maha Shivratri. "First of all, I would

like to apologize for being unable to speak the world's oldest language, Tamil. I extend my wishes on the occasion of Maha Shivratri. I am very grateful for the opportunity to visit here at the invitation of Sadhguru," he said.

The statement comes amid opposition from the ruling DMK in Tamil Nadu regarding the three-language policy outlined in the National Education Policy 2020. The DMK has strongly criticized the policy, alleging that it forces the imposition of Hindi in the state.

Shah also spoke of the widespread devotion to Lord Shiva

during the occasion of Maha Shivratri, calling it a time for "self-awakening." He praised the devotion across the nation, from Somnath to Kedar-nath, and stated that while the Mahakumbh in Prayagraj was concluding, the "Bhakti ka Mahakumbh" was happening in Coimbatore.

The Union Home Minister praised Isha Foundation founder Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, describing the center as more than just a pilgrimage site. "The place you have built is not only a pilgrimage site but a space for yoga, devotion, repentance, and liberation. Isha Yoga Centre has transformed many lives through yoga," he said, noting that the 112-foot Adiyogi Shiva statue represents 112 ways to achieve spirituality.

Shah concluded his visit by offering prayers at the 'Dhyaling' during a religious ceremony at the Isha Yoga Centre. The Maha Shivratri celebrations, which began at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, will continue until 6:00 AM on Thursday.

## Do not own any land, home or stocks in India : Sam Pitroda dismisses allegations

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Indian Overseas Congress chief Sam Pitroda has strongly denied allegations made by BJP leader N. R. Ramesh, who accused him of illegally acquiring 12.35 acres of government land in Bengaluru. Ramesh, a former councillor of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), claimed that Pitroda, with the help of five senior government officers, including those from the forest department, had illegally seized the land, valued at Rs 150 crore, in Yelahanka, Bengaluru, Karnataka.

Ramesh has lodged formal complaints with both the Enforcement Directorate and the Karnataka Lokayukta regarding the alleged land acquisition. The accusations have drawn significant media attention, prompting Pitroda to respond publicly.

In a statement released on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Pitroda refuted the claims and clarified his position, saying, "In light



of recent reports in the Indian media, both on television and in print, I wish to categorically state the following: I do not own any land, home, or stocks in India." The Congress leader, who currently resides in the United States, further emphasized that during his tenure working with the Indian government—under Prime Ministers Rajiv Gandhi in the mid-1980s and Dr. Manmohan Singh from 2004 to 2014—he had never received any salary.

Pitroda's statement aims to address the controversy and

clear his name, especially as the accusations have been circulating in the media. The allegations by Ramesh, if proven, could have serious legal and political implications, but Pitroda's swift denial seeks to put the matter to rest, at least for now.

As the investigation continues, it remains to be seen how the authorities will handle these accusations, particularly the involvement of senior government officials as claimed by Ramesh.

## CAG Report Sparks Debate on AAP's Excise Policy in Delhi Assembly



- CAG report flags AAP excise policy losses of ₹2,002 crore
- BJP alleges favoritism, lack of liquor quality checks
- AAP MLAs protest suspension outside Assembly

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi Assembly witnessed a heated discussion on Thursday over the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) report, which highlighted irregularities in the previous AAP government's excise policy. BJP MLAs criticized the policy for alleged favoritism in liquor licensing, opening of vends in residential areas, and the absence of mandatory lab tests before liquor sales.

The session began with only Amanatullah Khan representing the AAP in the House, as 21 other AAP legislators were protesting outside due to their suspension by Speaker Vijender Gupta. Before the excise policy debate, Malviya Nagar MLA Satish Upadhyay raised concerns over the neglect of a damaged Shaheed Bhagat Singh statue in a south Delhi park, accusing AAP of disrespecting the national hero.

During the discussion, BJP leaders pointed to the CAG report's findings that liquor licenses were

issued without proper quality checks, allegedly promoting the sale of illicit liquor. The report also revealed that the government suffered financial losses of Rs 941 crore due to exemptions given to zonal licensees and Rs 890 crore due to failure to re-tender surrendered liquor licenses.

Greater Kailash MLA Shika Rai argued that AAP's excise policy, which allowed "one-plus-one" liquor bottle schemes, had negatively impacted low-income groups, leading to increased domestic violence and financial distress. She emphasized that easy access to liquor worsened socio-economic problems in the city.

The CAG report, tabled in the Delhi Assembly earlier this week, estimated that the flawed excise policy under former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's government resulted in a total loss of over Rs 2,002 crore to the exchequer. The debate underscored the ongoing political tensions surrounding the policy, with BJP leaders demanding accountability from AAP.

## Punjab Government Makes Punjabi a Mandatory Subject Amid CBSE Controversy



TPN Correspondent | Punjab

The Punjab government announced on Wednesday that it has made Punjabi a mandatory subject in all schools across the state, claiming that the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) had removed it from the list of regional languages for Class 10 exams. However, the CBSE quickly refuted these allegations, confirming that Punjabi would continue to be offered as a subject for the 2025-2026 academic year.

Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh

Bains accused the BJP-led Centre and CBSE of conspiring to eliminate Punjabi as a primary subject, following the release of the new draft norms for the biannual board exam format. He described the move as an attack on Punjabi culture, stating that if Punjabi is not included as a main subject, students' certificates will be considered "null and void."

According to Bains, the CBSE's draft norms listed Science, Maths, Social Science, Hindi, and English as core subjects for Class 10, while regional and foreign

languages were grouped separately. He further claimed that this reorganization led to Punjabi being removed from the list of regional languages.

In response, the CBSE issued a clarification, stating that the draft list was only indicative and that all subjects, including Punjabi, would continue to be offered in the 2025-2026 academic session. The CBSE confirmed that Punjabi (along with several other regional languages) would remain available for Class 10 students.

The debate comes as part of the CBSE's wider changes, which include allowing Class 10 students to take exams twice a year starting in 2026. This new system aims to reduce the high-stakes nature of board exams by offering students multiple opportunities to improve their scores.

The controversy surrounding Punjabi reflects broader concerns about preserving regional languages in India's educational system. As the debate continues, the CBSE's clarification ensures that Punjabi will remain an option for students across the country.

## Cabinet Approves 14 Amendments to Controversial Waqf Bill Amid Political Row

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Union Cabinet has approved 14 out of 23 proposed changes to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, which governs the management of Muslim charitable properties in India. This follows a report by a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) on February 13. The changes were cleared after several rounds of disputes, particularly concerning opposition MPs' accusations of bias and procedural issues within the committee. The amended bill will likely be tabled when Parliament reconvenes on March 10, 2025.

The Waqf Bill, initially referred to the JPC in August 2024, has been a source of political friction, with the opposition accusing BJP members of rushing the bill through without adequate consultation. Opposition MPs alleged that their dissenting views were removed from the final report, a claim denied

by the government. After a meeting between opposition leaders and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, it was decided that the dissenting notes would be included in the final version of the report.

Among the 14 approved changes are provisions to ensure the inclusion of at least two non-Muslim members in Waqf councils, with further clarification that these members could be ex-officio appointments. Another significant change involves the designation of an officer, appointed by the state, to deter-



mine if a property is classified as 'waqf,' replacing the District Collector's role in the original draft. Additionally, the bill has been amended to ensure that the new rules will not apply retrospectively to properties already registered.

The bill's original proposal to nominate women and non-Muslim members to every Waqf board and to include Union ministers, MPs, and people of national repute in the Central Waqf Council has sparked significant opposition. Critics, including prominent Muslim leaders like Asaduddin Owaisi and Kanimozhi, argue that the bill infringes upon religious freedoms, citing potential violations of constitutional rights related to the practice of religion.

As the bill continues to stir debate, the government maintains that its intent is to empower Muslim women and children who have historically faced challenges under the existing law.

## Special Meeting in Delhi for 'In Principle Approval' of Parandur Airport Project



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu announced on Thursday that a special meeting will be held soon in New Delhi regarding the Tamil Nadu government's request for 'in principle approval' for the proposed second airport in Chennai, to be located in Parandur. The project has been a subject of ongoing discussions, with the Tamil Nadu government seeking clearance for the greenfield airport.

While speaking to reporters, Naidu emphasized that the Parandur site was identified by the state government,

state government which proposes, selects, and asks for site clearance. Then we study the feasibility, the operation, navigation, and technicalities," he stated. He further added that any issues related to land are handled by the state, and the central government simply assesses whether the proposed site is viable for an airport.

The proposed project has faced resistance from local villagers and farmers in Parandur and surrounding areas. They have expressed concerns over the potential loss of their lands, especially fertile agricultural land, which could be affected by the construction of the airport.

Naidu also mentioned that the state government had already applied for site clearance and received approval. The next step involves obtaining the 'in principle approval' from the central government, and a special meeting will be conducted in Delhi within the next week or two to further discuss the project and follow the due process.

which then sought the Central government's assistance in developing the project. He explained that the Central government is keen on expanding the country's airport infrastructure, but the selection of the site is solely the responsibility of the state government. After the state proposes a site, the central authorities conduct feasibility studies, examining various factors including operational and technical aspects.

Regarding concerns about land acquisition for the project, Naidu clarified that the state government handles the issue of land acquisition. "We are not the ones who select where the airport should be. It is the

## BJP lawmakers demand renaming Delhi's Najafgarh, Mohammadpur, Mustafabad



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

BJP MLA Neelam Pehalwan, representing the Najafgarh constituency, has submitted a proposal in the Delhi Assembly to rename Najafgarh as "Nahargarh." The proposal, made during a session of the Delhi Assembly on Thursday, aims to honor the legacy of Raja Nahar Singh, a prominent figure in the history of the region.

In a statement to the media, Pehalwan explained her motivation for the renaming effort, saying, "Today, I raised the issue of Najafgarh that its name should be changed to 'Nahargarh.' I have reached this position as the representative

of the people of Najafgarh, so it is my priority to raise their voice."

Pehalwan elaborated that her proposal is not only a tribute to the valor of Raja Nahar Singh, who played a crucial role during the 1857 revolt, but also to correct a historical injustice. She pointed out that the area was renamed by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, and she believes that restoring the original name of "Nahargarh" would be a fitting tribute to the region's historical roots.

In her address to the Assembly, Pehalwan spoke about the oppression faced by the people of Najafgarh when

Emperor Shah Alam II took control of the area. She added that Raja Nahar Singh fought bravely during the 1857 uprising, bringing the region under Delhi's jurisdiction. Pehalwan emphasized the historical importance of restoring the name as a symbol of the sacrifices made by the region's kings in the fight for independence.

Pehalwan's proposal echoes earlier efforts, including initiatives led by Member of Parliament Parvesh Verma, to rename Najafgarh to "Nahargarh." She stressed that the people of the area have suffered much throughout history, and the name change would serve as an acknowledgment of their resilience and heritage.

In a related development, RK Puram MLA Anil Sharma also submitted a proposal in the Delhi Assembly to rename Mohammadpur, located within his constituency, to "Madhavpur." The renaming efforts reflect a broader movement to re-establish historical and cultural identities across various regions.



## Heatwave and Humid Conditions Predicted for Coastal Karnataka

TPN Correspondent | MANGALURU

Coastal Karnataka is expected to experience hot and humid conditions until February 28, with heatwave conditions continuing until February 27, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Bengaluru. The IMD issued a report on Wednesday, forecasting an increase in relative humidity between 45% and 60%, with maximum air temperatures reaching 36 to 38 degrees Celsius across the region.

the IMD has advised residents to avoid direct sunlight, particularly between noon and 3 p.m., when the sun is at its peak intensity. To combat the heat, individuals are urged to stay hydrated by drinking water, Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS), lassi, lime water, and buttermilk. The IMD also recommends wearing light-colored clothing, using a cloth, hat, or umbrella to cover the head, and ensuring that animals are kept in shaded areas with access to plenty of water.

2.2 degrees Celsius over the normal minimum. The maximum temperature across the region was also above normal, ranging between 36 and 38 degrees Celsius, with Karwar reaching the highest temperature in the state at 37.6 degrees Celsius.

Residents of coastal Karnataka are advised to take necessary precautions to stay safe during these extreme weather conditions, including avoiding unnecessary outdoor activities and keeping cool by staying in well-ventilated spaces. The IMD's forecast highlights the ongoing heatwave's impact on both people and animals in the region.

As of February 26, the minimum temperature recorded over coastal Karnataka ranged between 21 and 23 degrees Celsius. Karwar, however, saw a rise in the minimum temperature, recording an increase of

The combination of high temperatures and humidity levels is expected to make the perceived temperature feel like it ranges between 40 and 50 degrees Celsius. In light of this,

- Heatwave in coastal Karnataka till Feb 27
- Temperatures to feel like 40-50°C due to humidity
- IMD advises hydration, shade, and protective clothing

## Steps initiated in Belagavi to contain bird flu following outbreak in Latur



TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

In response to the recent outbreak of H5N1 Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) in neighbouring Maharashtra's Udayagiri region, the Belagavi district administration has launched extensive measures to prevent the spread of the disease. The administration is screening samples from individual and company farms, as well as setting up check posts at the inter-state border with Maharashtra and Goa.

Belagavi, home to 26.40 lakh broilers as per the 20th livestock census, has proactively positioned seven check posts on the Maharashtra and Goa borders. These check posts are strategically located at Kottalagi, Kagwada, Koganolli, Sankeshwar, Hindalaga, Examba, and Kanakumbi. These locations are under the supervision of officials from the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Departments, with round-the-clock operations in three shifts. The aim is to inspect chicken, eggs, chicken meat, and chicken by-products coming from both Maharashtra and Goa.

The district has also focused on monitoring migratory and local birds around riverside villages and water bodies. If any birds are found dead under unusual circumstances, their bodies are sent to the southern regional disease diagnostic laboratory in Bengaluru for testing. To prevent the spread of the disease,

authorities are regularly collecting swab samples across the district, with 363 serum, cloacal, and tracheal samples, along with 138 environmental samples, already submitted for analysis.

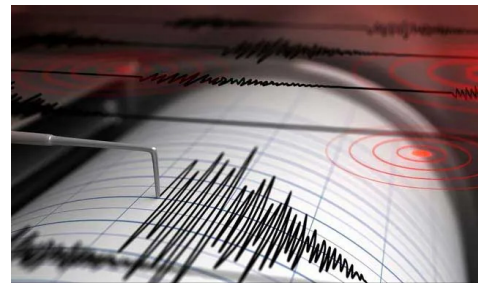
A comprehensive response plan has been put into action, which includes appointing a Nodal Officer and a Technical Assistant for the district's avian influenza control program. Additionally, 15 Veterinary Officers have been assigned as Nodal Officers, and a Rapid Action Team (RAT) has been established in each taluk for field operations. These teams will consist of a qualified veterinary officer, support staff, and assistants.

Workshops have been organized to educate poultry farmers and entrepreneurs about prevention measures, and the district is ready with supplies such as disinfectants, PPE kits, fogging machines, and other equipment necessary to control and dispose of infected poultry.

District authorities, including Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Roshan, have assured the public that all precautionary steps are in place. There have been no reports of avian influenza in the district so far, but measures are in place to prevent the disease's transmission from birds to humans. People have been advised to safely cook eggs and chicken at temperatures above 70°C, and to contact veterinarians if abnormal bird deaths are observed.

The district continues to coordinate with various departments, including Animal Husbandry, Health and Family Welfare, and Forest Departments, to ensure the effective containment of H5N1 and protect public health.

## Magnitude 5 Earthquake Strikes Morigaon District in Assam



TPN Correspondent | Assam

An earthquake of magnitude 5.0 on the Richter scale struck Assam's Morigaon district early Thursday morning, as reported by the National Center for Seismology (NCS). The earthquake occurred at 2:25 am IST, with the epicenter located at a depth of 16 kilometers.

According to the NCS, the earthquake had the following details: "EQ of M: 5.0, On: 27/02/2025 02:25:40 IST, Lat: 26.28 N, Long: 92.24 E, Depth:

16 Km, Location: Morigaon, Assam," the NCS posted on social media platform X.

Fortunately, there have been no immediate reports of damage or casualties from the earthquake. However, residents of the region were shaken by the tremors, and authorities are closely monitoring the situation. Morigaon district, located in Assam, is no stranger to seismic activity, given the region's vulnerability to earthquakes due to its proximity to major fault lines.

This earthquake comes just days after a previous seismic event. On Tuesday, an earthquake of magnitude 5.1 struck the Bay of Bengal in the early hours of February 25. The tremor occurred at 6:10 am IST at a depth of 91 kilometers.

The NCS provided the following details for the Bay of Bengal earthquake: "EQ of M: 5.1, On: 25/02/2025 06:10:25 IST, Lat: 19.52 N, Long: 88.55 E, Depth: 91 Km, Location: Bay of Bengal," the NCS reported on X.

The Bay of Bengal earthquake occurred at a significant depth, which likely reduced the intensity of the tremors felt on land. While the Bay of Bengal is a seismically active area, especially along the fault zones, no major damage or casualties have been reported from this earthquake either.

Both these events have brought attention to the ongoing seismic activity in the region, with authorities urging residents to stay prepared and follow safety guidelines during such occurrences.

## Remember Nirbhaya? DY Chandrachud On Pune Bus Rape Case

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The recent rape case in Pune, where a young woman was assaulted just 100 meters from a police station at the Swargate Bus Stand, has sparked outrage across the country. Maharashtra's deputy chief ministers, Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, have demanded the death penalty for the accused, highlighting the horrific nature of the crime.

This incident has reignited discussions around India's rape laws, which were supposed to be strengthened following the brutal 2012 Delhi gang-rape and murder, known as the 'Nirbhaya' case. The assault in 2012, which included the insertion of iron rods into the victim's body, sparked nationwide protests and led to significant changes in the legal framework, including a tougher definition of rape and the introduction of a minimum 20-year

prison sentence for those causing death or a persistent vegetative state.

However, despite these changes, reports of violent assaults, including the use of objects and substances in rapes, continue to surface, raising questions about the effectiveness of these legal reforms. Ex-Supreme Court Chief Justice DY Chandrachud weighed in on Thursday, acknowledging the improvements made after the Nirbhaya case but stressing that laws alone

cannot prevent such incidents. He called for a broader societal responsibility in ensuring the safety of women and emphasized that these laws must be properly implemented.

Chandrachud further stressed the importance of swift justice in such cases, urging for proper investigations, strong action, and timely punishment. "Women should feel safe wherever they go," he said, highlighting the crucial role of the legal system and police in protecting women.

On the 12th anniversary of the Nirbhaya case, her mother expressed her ongoing pain and frustration over the lack of progress in women's safety across India. "The daughters of the country are not safe," she lamented, calling for meaningful action to ensure justice for women.



## 104 Firearms and Ammunition Surrendered in Manipur Amid Ongoing Strife

TPN Correspondent | Manipur

In a significant development in conflict-ridden Manipur, the public voluntarily surrendered a total of 104 firearms and ammunition across six districts on Wednesday, a day before the deadline set by authorities. The weapons were handed over in Kangpokpi, Imphal East, Bishnupur, Thoubal, Imphal West, and Kakching districts. This surrender came in response to a call by Manipur's Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, who urged citizens to voluntarily return looted

or illegally held weapons within a seven-day window, ensuring that no punitive action would be taken against those complying during the period.

The surrender is part of the ongoing efforts to curb violence in the region, which has seen severe ethnic clashes between the Meitei community in the Imphal Valley and the Kuki-Zo groups in the adjoining hills since May 2023. More than 250 lives have been lost, and thousands have been displaced due to the unrest.



Governor Bhalla had made the appeal on February 20, and Chief Secretary PK Singh reinforced this on February 23, emphasizing that the

seven-day period was ample time for anyone wishing to voluntarily surrender arms. Singh also stated that after the deadline, the authorities would take decisive action to recover any remaining weapons.

The surrender of firearms comes just as the seven-day period nears its end, which could signal a step towards reducing the intensity of violence in the state. The efforts are further bolstered by the imposition of President's rule on February 13, following the resignation of Chief

Minister N Biren Singh, which led to a political crisis in the region.

Authorities remain hopeful that the surrender of firearms will contribute to restoring peace, though they have also warned that further steps will be taken to ensure law and order if the voluntary surrender is not fully complied with. The situation in Manipur remains tense, with efforts to address both the ethnic violence and political instability ongoing.



# Kumbh Mela: A Rebirth of Hindu Identity and Independence

A new beginning after ending 1200 years of foreign rule and 60 years congress rule.

The Kumbh Mela is seen as a spiritual and cultural assertion of Hindu identity.

Over 60 crore Hindus participated, reaffirming their commitment to Sanatana Dharma.

The gathering signifies the end of centuries of foreign rule and ideological oppression.

Calls for unity to protect and promote Hindu heritage have gained momentum.

Many view it as a revival after decades of political and historical neglect.



Dr. Buragadda Srinadh

The Kumbh Mela, one of the world's largest religious congregations, has evolved beyond a spiritual gathering to symbolize a larger cultural resurgence for Hindus. With over 60 crore devotees taking a dip in the sacred rivers, the event is being hailed as a reaffirmation of Hindu heritage and identity. For many, this year's Kumbh represents a new beginning—an assertion of self-respect and a break from centuries of oppression under foreign rule and decades of political neglect. For over 1,200 years, Bharat faced in-

vasions from external forces, most notably the Mughals, whose rule led to the large-scale destruction of Hindu temples and cultural sites. Millions of Hindus perished while resisting religious conversions and the imposition of foreign ideologies. This was followed by British colonial rule, which systematically exploited the subcontinent's resources, leaving behind an impoverished and culturally fragmented society. Post-independence, the Congress government's six-decade rule is seen by many as a continuation of

this neglect. Critics argue that successive administrations fabricated historical narratives, glorified invaders, and diminished Hindu contributions to the nation. Streets and institutions in Delhi and other parts of India were named after Mughal rulers, while indigenous Hindu heritage was overlooked. This perceived marginalization of Hindus reached its peak under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, further alienating large sections of society. Against this backdrop, the Kumbh Mela has emerged as a pow-

erful symbol of Hindu resurgence. It is not just a religious gathering but a call to unity, urging Hindus to stand together in defense of their Sanatana Dharma. The event serves as a reminder of the resilience and survival of Hindu traditions despite historical adversities. This year's Kumbh has also given rise to discussions about reclaiming Hindu history and ensuring future generations are aware of their rich cultural past. Many Hindu leaders and scholars have emphasized the need for an accurate representation of history, free

from political distortions. There is also a growing sentiment that Hindus must take an active role in protecting their temples, traditions, and cultural heritage. As millions of devotees converge at the Kumbh Mela, the event signifies more than a religious observance—it is a rallying cry for the preservation and celebration of Hindu identity. The gathering has rekindled the spirit of unity among Hindus, reinforcing their commitment to ensuring that their traditions and values remain strong for generations to come.

## The Rise of the Far Right in Germany: A New Political Landscape

The 2025 German federal election has resulted in a major shift in Europe's political dynamics. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU/CSU) emerged as the strongest party with 28.5% of the vote, while the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) made significant gains, securing 20.8%, nearly doubling its previous vote share. This outcome highlights deepening regional, generational, and ideological divides within Germany: while West Germany largely supported the CDU, the East strongly backed the AfD. This stark division poses significant questions about Germany's future direction, particularly in terms of security, economic policy, and its role in the European Union. This election comes at a pivotal moment for Germany, as it faces crucial geopolitical challenges. The ongoing Ukraine war, economic strain, and security concerns are reshaping Germany's foreign policy and its relations with the United States and NATO. As the war strains Germany's economy, debates over the future of NATO and European defense autonomy have intensified. CDU leader Friedrich Merz, who is expected to become the next chancellor, will play a pivotal role in shaping Germany's stance on Ukraine, European security, and transatlantic relations. These issues are set to dominate the upcoming coalition negotiations.

### A Grand Coalition and the Challenges Ahead

The election results reflect a generational realignment in



German politics. While the CDU retained significant support among older voters (particularly those above 60), it struggled to connect with younger voters, who flocked to the AfD. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) also saw a decline, with younger left-wing voters shifting to Die Linke and the newly formed Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW). Meanwhile, the Free Democratic Party (FDP) failed to meet the electoral threshold, signaling a shift away from economic centrism. With mainstream parties firmly rejecting cooperation with the AfD, a CDU-SPD "grand coalition" is the most likely outcome. Merz has set an Easter deadline to finalize the coalition agreement, emphasizing economic stability, European integration, and security concerns. The new Bundestag will begin its term on March 25, and Merz aims to prioritize economic reforms, such as corporate tax reductions and incentives for skilled labor migration to address Germany's labor shortages. This coalition will face three major challenges: economic recovery, defense, and the ongoing Ukraine crisis. The German economy is grappling with inflation, energy dependency,

and global supply chain disruptions, and the CDU's pro-business stance suggests a push for corporate tax reforms and deregulation. Additionally, Merz has pledged to work towards greater European defense autonomy, signaling a shift in Germany's foreign policy to reduce reliance on the U.S. while maintaining support for Ukraine.

### Geopolitical Maneuvering and AfD's Rise

AfD's surge in eastern Germany reflects widespread dissatisfaction with economic stagnation, migration policies, and political elites. The party's rise highlights a growing disconnect between the electorate and mainstream political parties. As the largest opposition party, AfD is likely to push for more stringent immigration controls and challenge EU directives. This shift poses a dilemma for the CDU and SPD. Ignoring the economic frustrations and cultural tensions driving AfD's popularity could further alienate voters, while engaging with AfD's rhetoric risks legitimizing its far-right positions. The coalition government will need to address these issues without fueling populist extremism.

## Can India-EU trade ties withstand global geopolitical fragmentation?



Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, is leading a high-profile visit to India accompanied by the College of Commissioners, marking an unprecedented diplomatic initiative. The delegation includes key European figures such as Foreign Policy Chief Kaja Kallas, five executive vice-presidents, and 20 commissioners, each representing the EU's member states. During the visit, von der Leyen and her team are set to meet with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other officials to discuss enhancing EU-India relations in trade, technology, energy transition, and more. The visit takes place amidst a critical phase in global geopolitics, where both India and the EU are grappling with the complexities of a fragmented world order. The India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) will con-

vene as part of this engagement. Historically, the EU has played a pivotal role in India's trade and investment landscape, with bilateral trade in goods and services reaching nearly \$200 billion in 2021, maintaining a balanced trade flow for years. Furthermore, India has attracted around \$120 billion in EU investments, marking the EU as a major partner in India's modernization journey. India's recent willingness to engage in trade deals, after years of caution, has led to agreements with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and ongoing negotiations with the UK. Despite challenges posed by EU's global trade agreements and India's concerns about certain aspects of EU regulations, both sides are determined to continue talks on trade and investment. The geopolitical landscape,

marked by the ongoing Ukraine conflict and growing tensions between the US and Russia, has presented new opportunities for India and the EU to strengthen ties. While India's stance on the Ukraine crisis has differed from the EU's, both parties have found common ground in areas like the Indo-Pacific region, where cooperation through initiatives like the TTC and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) are gaining momentum. Energy transition, a major challenge for Europe, offers another area for collaboration. Although India remains cautious about the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), both regions face the urgent need for climate action and can work together on initiatives like the International Solar Alliance and technology transfers to the Global South.



## Maha Kumbh was like a nation breathing with a new consciousness: PM Modi

- Calls Maha Kumbh a symbol of unity
- Urges India to move forward with confidence
- Links event to nation's transformation and vision of 'Viksit Bharat'

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday compared the conclusion of the Maha Kumbh Mela to the newly awakened consciousness of India, symbolizing a nation that has shaken off the chains of a "slavery mindset" and is now breathing freely. In a blog post published a day after the mega religious event concluded, Modi referred to the gathering as a "mahayagna" of unity and emphasized the importance of moving forward with the same sense of self-confidence and unity.

"The Maha Kumbh has concluded. The 'mahayagna' of unity has concluded," the Prime Minister wrote.

He further reflected on the immense significance of the gathering, noting how it had served as a powerful symbol of spiritual and cultural unity. The event, which attracted millions of devotees, was a demonstration of India's diverse yet unified spirit.

Modi stressed that the nation now needs to move forward with the same collective energy to achieve the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India). He expressed his belief that India's future lies in this awakened consciousness, where every citizen takes part in the collective journey toward progress and prosperity. According to the Prime Minister, the Maha Kumbh was not just a religious event but a metaphor for the

country's transformation, from a history of subjugation to an era of empowerment and growth.

The Prime Minister's message resonates with his vision for a self-reliant, prosperous India, where unity, self-confidence, and collective effort are at the heart of the nation's development. As the country continues its journey toward becoming a developed nation, Modi called for every individual to contribute toward building a stronger and more united India. The Prime Minister concluded his post by emphasizing the importance of keeping the spirit of unity and empowerment alive, as the nation works towards achieving its goals.

## Prashant Kishor Says Actor Vijay Is "New Hope" For Tamil Nadu

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Jan Suraaj Party Chief Prashant Kishor has strongly endorsed Tamila Vetti Kazhagam (TVK) and its leader, Vijay, as a promising force for change in Tamil Nadu politics ahead of the 2026 Assembly Elections. Speaking at TVK's one-year celebration on Wednesday, Kishor, who serves as an advisor to Vijay, described the TVK Chief as a "new hope" for millions seeking a change in the state's political landscape.

Kishor emphasized that Vijay does not require assistance with political strategy. He stated, "I announced four years ago that I wouldn't work with any party or leader, but Vijay is not just a political leader for me. He is the new hope for Tamil Nadu. TVK is a movement of millions who want to see a new political order in the state, and Vijay represents that change."

Additionally, Kishor took aim at the ruling DMK, accusing its governance model of fostering corruption, dynasty politics, and communalism. His remarks were a clear critique of the current political establishment in Tamil Nadu.



Meanwhile, TVK Chief Vijay weighed in on the controversy surrounding the Centre's three-language policy. He criticized the state and central governments, likening their dispute to a petty fight among Kindergarten students. "Funds for education have been stopped by the state government. This is like an LKG-UKG fight. Their responsibility is to give, and the state's responsibility is to get its rights," Vijay remarked, adding that the ongoing political drama between the BJP and DMK was a distraction from critical issues.

Vijay also outlined his vision for TVK,

emphasizing that the party was focused on empowering the poor and marginalized. "Our party is for the simple people, not for landlords. Those in power today are becoming the new landlords, and our first job is to remove them from politics. We aim to focus on people's welfare and national well-being," he said, stressing the importance of strengthening the party's organizational structure.

The support from Prashant Kishor and Vijay's growing political platform signals a shift in Tamil Nadu's political dynamics as the 2026 elections approach.

## UP, Bihar were never 'Hindi heartlands: CM Stalin lists languages 'swallowed by Hindi'

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin sharply criticized the push for a monolithic Hindi identity, claiming it has led to the erosion of ancient mother tongues in India. In a post shared on social media, Mr. Stalin highlighted how many regional languages, which once coexisted with Hindi, are now "gasping for survival." Mr. Stalin pointed out languages such as Bhojpuri, Maithili, Awadhi,



Braj, Bundeli, Garhwali, Kumaoni, Magahi, Marwari, Malvi, Chhattisgarhi, Santhali, and many others

that were once widely spoken but are now endangered. He called upon the people of other states to understand the consequences of this push and questioned if they were aware of the languages lost due to Hindi's dominance.

The Chief Minister further contended that the real languages of states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were being relegated to history, claiming these regions were never "just Hindi heartlands."



## EU Chief Ursula Arrives in India for Two-Day Visit: Strengthening EU-India Ties

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

European Commission (EC) President Ursula von der Leyen arrived in India on Thursday for a two-day visit aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, defence, and clean energy. Accompanied by the European Union (EU) College of Commissioners, which consists of senior ministers from the 27 EU member states, von der Leyen's visit comes at a time of global concerns regarding US President Donald Trump's economic policies.

During her visit, von der Leyen will engage in talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on various sectors, with a particular focus on the India-EU free trade agreement. The visit is also expected to lay the groundwork for a new strategic partnership roadmap, which will be formally unveiled during the India-EU Summit scheduled to take place later this year in New Delhi.

Upon arriving in New Delhi, von der Leyen took to social media to express her commitment to the visit, stating, "Touchdown in Delhi with my team of Commissioners." She further emphasized, "In an era of conflicts and intense competition, you need trusted friends. For Europe, India is such a friend and a strategic ally."

The primary objective of von der Leyen's visit is to expand economic cooperation between India and the EU, especially in trade and investment, as well as to address issues such as tariffs and defence collaboration. However, both sides are not expected to reach a final agreement during this visit, with EU officials noting that the long-running negotiations, which began in 2007, will continue for some time.

One of the key areas of discussion will be India's tariffs on cars, wine, and agricultural products, with the EU pressing for reductions. The two sides will also explore opportunities to expand defence equipment exports from the EU to India.

Amid concerns over the return of Donald Trump to the White House, European nations, including the EU, have expressed unease over his policies of reciprocal tariffs. The 27-member EU bloc is keen on boosting trade with India, with both parties optimistic that the proposed free trade pact will enhance economic engagement.

On Thursday, von der Leyen met with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, and on Friday, she will hold a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Modi, followed by a joint press statement.

## Bihar Cabinet expansion: Nitish allocates portfolios to 7 newly-inducted BJP MLAs

TPN Correspondent | Bihar

Nitish Kumar-led Bihar government announced the updated portfolios for its Cabinet ministers following a major reshuffle. The changes came just a day after the state expanded its council of ministers, including seven newly inducted BJP MLAs. This strategic move is seen as an effort to strengthen the government's position ahead of the upcoming state assembly elections.



The seven new ministers sworn in are Sanjay Sarangi, Sunil Kumar, Jibesh Mishra, Krishna Kumar Mantoo, Motilal Prasad, Vijay Kumar Mandal, and Raju Kumar Singh. All these new cabinet members hail from the BJP, signaling a shift in the political dynamics of Bihar, where the ruling Janata Dal (United) [JDU] party, led by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, continues to maintain a significant presence in the state.

This reshuffle comes at a time when political alliances are being carefully recalibrated, with both regional and national political dynamics playing a crucial role in the run-up to the elections. The inclusion of BJP MLAs is seen as a way to ensure a broader support base, as the party seeks to maintain its influence in Bihar's political landscape.

The move reflects a strategy by CM Nitish Kumar and JDU to align more closely with the BJP in order to secure their position as the ruling party in the state. The expanded council of ministers is expected to strengthen the government's decision-making ability and address the challenges posed by political rivals ahead of the crucial assembly elections.

Political analysts believe that the inclusion of BJP representatives in the cabinet, despite Bihar's complex political coalition, could have a significant impact on the upcoming elections, potentially influencing the state's power dynamics.

# Pakistan in no position to lecture anyone: India at UN

TPN Correspondent | Geneva

India launched a sharp counterattack on Pakistan at the seventh meeting of the 58th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva, dismissing its allegations regarding human rights violations in Jammu and Kashmir. India's Permanent Mission to the UN, Kshitij Tyagi, described Pakistan as a "failed state" that survives on international aid and accused its leadership of spreading falsehoods dictated by the military. Responding to Pakistani law minister Azam Nazeer Tarar's accusations, Tyagi said, "It is regrettable to see Pakistan's leaders and delegates continuing to spread falsehoods handed down by its military terrorist complex. Pakistan is making a mockery of the OIC by abusing it as its mouthpiece. It is unfortunate that this Council's time continues to be wasted by a failed state which thrives on instability and survives on international handouts. Its rhetoric reeks of hypocrisy, its actions of inhumanity and its governance of incompetence."

The Indian envoy criticized Pa-



kistan for misusing international forums to push anti-India rhetoric while failing to address its own internal crises. He reaffirmed that Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are integral parts of India, highlighting the substantial political, social, and economic progress achieved in these regions in recent years.

"The Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh will always remain an integral and inalienable part of In-

dia. The unprecedented political, social, and economic progress in J&K in the past few years speaks for itself. These successes are a testament to the people's trust in the government's commitment to bring normalcy to a region scarred by decades of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism," he said.

Tyagi also pointed to Pakistan's deteriorating human rights record, citing its persecution of minorities, suppression of po-

litical dissent, and harboring of UN-sanctioned terrorists. "As a country where human rights abuses, persecution of minorities, and systematic erosion of democratic values constitute state policies, Pakistan is in no position to lecture anyone," he asserted.

India's strong response at the UNHRC follows a similar statement made on February 19 by India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish. During an Open Debate at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), Harish had reaffirmed, "The Deputy PM and Foreign Minister of Pakistan have referred to an integral and inalienable part of India, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in his remarks. I would like to reaffirm that the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been, is, and will always be, an integral and inalienable part of India."

India continues to emphasize its commitment to democracy, development, and human rights, urging Pakistan to focus on governance and justice for its own people rather than engaging in baseless propaganda at global forums.



## PM Modi Was First World Leader to Call Israel After October 7 Attack: Israeli Envoy

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Israeli Ambassador to India, Reuven Azar, has revealed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the first world leader to reach out to Israel following the deadly Hamas terror attack on October 7, 2023. Expressing gratitude for Modi's unwavering support, Azar praised the Indian leader's commitment to strengthening India-Israel ties.

"We are actually looking with admiration at the achievements of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His friendship is very dear to us. We saw he was the first to call us following the 7th of October. We saw how he stood by us during the last year and a half," Azar said in an exclusive interview with IANS.

The October 7 attack resulted in the deaths of over 1,200 people in Israel, with another 250 taken hostage. Modi had condemned the attack immediately, calling it a terrorist act and expressing solidarity with Israel. Azar emphasized the deepening strategic cooperation between the two nations, noting that both countries face similar challenges and share a common outlook on global security. "We know that we think alike on many things. We look at things in a similar way. We have similar challenges. Therefore, I am confident that in the coming years, we will be able to do many more things together," he added. The Israeli envoy also discussed the situation in Gaza, ongoing ceasefire efforts, and the role of the US administration in addressing regional stability.

## At Trump's 1st Cabinet Meet, Musk Says

### He's Getting "Lot Of Death Threats"

TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C.

Billionaire Elon Musk, head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), revealed during US President Donald Trump's first cabinet meeting of his second term that he has been receiving "a lot of death threats" due to his efforts in cutting federal government spending.

Musk attended the meeting on Wednesday amid widespread criticism of the administration's aggressive cost-cutting measures. When Trump asked him to elaborate on DOGE's initiatives, Musk explained that the team is working to overhaul outdated government systems while significantly reducing expenditure.

"It's an honour to have you. He's been a tremendously successful



guy. He's really working so hard. And he's got businesses to run. And in many ways, they say, 'How do you do this?' And, you know, he's sacrificing a lot and—getting a lot of praise, I'll tell you, but he's also getting hit. And we would expect that, and that's the way it works," Trump said, acknowledging Musk's efforts.

Wearing a black "Make America Great Again" baseball cap, Musk described his role as "humble tech

support" due to the DOGE team's focus on fixing outdated government computer systems. He emphasized that many federal software infrastructures are obsolete and inefficient, leading to errors and miscommunication.

"The overall goal with the DOGE team is to help address the enormous deficit. If we don't do this, America will go bankrupt," Musk told cabinet members, adding that the country cannot sustain

a \$2 trillion deficit. He reiterated his commitment to cost-cutting despite facing severe backlash. Musk acknowledged that DOGE's reforms may not always be perfect but assured that mistakes would be promptly corrected. He cited a brief cancellation of Ebola prevention under USAID as an example, which was quickly reinstated after being identified as an error. "We do need to move quickly if we're to achieve a trillion-dollar deficit reduction in financial year 2026. It requires saving \$4 billion per day, every day from now through the end of September. But we can do it, and we will do it," Musk affirmed.

The meeting highlighted the Trump administration's determination to push through significant fiscal reforms despite growing resistance.

## Bangladeshi Students Who Led Protests

### Against Sheikh Hasina Launch Political Party

TPN Correspondent | Dhaka

Students who played a pivotal role in last year's uprising against former Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina have launched a new political party, intensifying the country's political landscape ahead of the upcoming elections. The new group, named Ganatantrik Chhatra Sangsad (Democratic Student Council), consists of key figures from the Students Against Discrimination (SAD) movement, which led the revolution that forced Hasina from power in August. However, the launch of the party has sparked divisions, with rival student factions accusing them of betraying the revolution. Political disagreements over representation led to physical clashes among members when the group's name was officially announced on Wednesday. Adding to the growing discord, other SAD leaders—some of whom were included in the interim government after Hasina fled to India—are expected to form a separate party on Friday.

The Ganatantrik Chhatra Sangsad also includes students previously associated with the youth wing of Hasina's Awami League. However,



its leaders insist they have carefully vetted members to ensure no one involved in mass violence or repression during the revolution is part of the new party.

"While accommodating students from the Awami League, we ensured that none of them were involved in mass murder or torture during the revolution," said Zahid Ahsan, a leader of the group.

"We are dedicated to protecting student rights and upholding the spirit of the movement that ended Hasina's autocratic grip."

Hasina remains in self-imposed exile in India, defying an arrest warrant issued in Dhaka on charges including crimes against humanity. Meanwhile, tensions among student groups continue to rise, with more than 150 peo-

ple injured in violent clashes this month.

Caretaker government head and Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus has indicated that general elections are likely to be held in late 2025 or early 2026. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Hasina's long-time rival, is widely expected to dominate the elections.



## Trump Unveils 'Gold Card' for Wealthy Investors

TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C.

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday announced a new immigration initiative, the "Gold Card" program, which would offer residency and a path to citizenship for individuals willing to pay \$5 million. The move is aimed at creating an alternative legal immigration pathway while generating significant revenue for the government. Trump stated that the program is set to launch in two weeks and expressed confidence that congressional approval would not be required. However, immigration experts have suggested that lawmakers would likely need to approve such a policy change.

The President indicated that discussions were still ongoing regarding the vetting criteria for applicants. When asked whether restrictions would be placed on individuals from rival nations such as China, Trump clarified that limitations might not be nationality-based but emphasized that there would still be eligibility rules.

"We want to make sure we have people that love our country and are capable of loving the country," Trump said.

Sitting beside Trump, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick suggested that the new program could potentially replace the existing EB-5 visa, which currently grants permanent residency to foreign investors who create at least 10 American jobs through a qualifying business investment.

Under the Gold Card proposal, applicants would make direct payments to the US government rather than private businesses. Trump argued that this approach could help reduce national debt, claiming that selling 1 million gold cards could raise \$5 trillion. However, immigration experts have questioned the feasibility of this estimate, noting that the number of individuals who could afford such a program is relatively small.



# Flat Market Close

## Global Uncertainty and FII Outflows Weigh

### Yet Banks and Metals Provide Support



Domestic stock markets closed flat today. Mixed signals from international markets, negative sentiment in the market and FIIs leaving were the reasons for this. Investors were cautious as monthly derivatives were due to the end. They did not tend to buy. However, the cool-off of India Vics is a good development. Nifty has been moving in a range-bound manner since morning. Metal, bank and finance shares performed well. Nifty settled at 22,545, Sensex settled at 74,612.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 74,602 in the previous session, opened at 74,706 on Thursday. It touched an intraday low of 74,520. It reached an intraday high of 74,839. It finally closed at 74,612 with a gain of 10 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 22,568, touched a low of 22,508 and a high of 22,613. It closed at 22,545, down 2 points. The Nifty Bank rose 135 points to settle at 48,743.

In the Nifty50, 19 companies gained while 31 lost. The Bank Nifty rose 135 Pts to settle at 48,743. Finance, bank and metal shares rose. Auto, media, government bank, realty, consumer durables, oil and gas shares rose. Shriram Finance, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Hindalco, Sun Pharma were the top gainers. Ultratech Sem, Trent, Bajaj Auto, Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra were the top losers.



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Market breadth on NSE today is in favour of sellers. Out of 2936 shares traded, only 570 gained. 2292 lost. Shares of 17 companies reached 52-week highs. Only 399 reached 52-week lows. While 41 shares touched the upper circuit, 201 touched the lower circuit.

Rupee settled at 87.19 against the dollar. Morgan Stanley maintained equal weight rating on Bharti Airtel with a target price of Rs.1650. Nomura has given a buy rating to Alkem Laboratories with a target price of Rs.5430.

Bloomberg reported that 40 lakh shares in CG Power changed hands. Dronacharya Aerial Agriever Multipurpose Advanced Drone received DGCA Authorized Certificate. GR Infra signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a ropeway project in Assam. India Vicks fell 4% to 13.17. Ultratech Cements entered the cable and wires sector with an investment of Rs 1800 crore, causing all the shares of that sector to fall. CBI registered a case against Godrej Estates Developers. 30 lakh shares changed hands in two block trades held in ITC. Electronics Mart started commercial operations in Telangana Charcoal Project. Jefferies has given a buy rating to Ultratech Cement with a target price of Rs 13,265. Mastec received orders worth \$ 85 million.

**Shriram Finance**  
Shriram Finance is a leading NBFC with a strong focus on commercial vehicle financing and consumer loans. The company has consistently grown its revenue through an expanding loan portfolio, supported by disciplined risk management and robust asset quality. With low NPAs and diversified exposure across retail and commercial lending, Shriram Finance remains well positioned to capture increasing credit demand in a growing economy.



**Chola Finance**  
Chola Finance, a prominent player

in the NBFC space, specializes in commercial vehicle financing and asset-backed loans. It has built a reputation for innovative financial solutions and strong customer service. The company has shown steady growth in its loan book and profitability, supported by cost efficiency and sound credit risk practices. However, it remains sensitive to macroeconomic conditions and regulatory changes that affect the broader credit market.



**Just Dial**  
Just Dial is a leading local search and information services provider in India. It offers a broad range of digital services, including business listings, consumer reviews, and advertising solutions, which generate diversified revenue streams. While the competitive digital landscape poses challenges, Just Dial continues to invest in technology and data analytics to improve its service offerings. Its established market presence and robust distribution network make it a key player in the digital information space, with potential for further growth as more businesses embrace online marketing.



**M&M Financial Services (M&M FIN)**  
M&M Financial Services, part of the Mahindra Group, offers a range of financial products including personal and vehicle loans, and insurance. The firm benefits from a strong brand presence and deep penetration in both urban and rural markets. Its focus on digital transformation and financial inclusion has driven consistent



growth in its customer base and revenues. With solid asset quality and expanding loan disbursements, M&M Financial Services is poised for continued growth, although competition in the NBFC space remains a challenge.

**Bajaj Finserv (BAJFINSERV)**  
Bajaj Finserv is a diversified financial services conglomerate operating in consumer finance, insurance, and wealth management. The company has shown impressive growth in its loan disbursements and consistently strong profitability, driven by efficient risk management and a low level of NPAs. Its digital platform enhances customer acquisition and cross-selling, further bolstering its revenue streams. With a strong brand and diversified business model, Bajaj Finserv continues to lead in the NBFC sector, offering significant long-term growth potential.



## 16<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission Majority of States Demand 50% Share in Tax Revenue



A total of 21 states have submitted recommendations to the 16th Finance Commission, seeking an increase in their share of tax revenue from 41% to 50%, according to sources familiar with the matter. The commission, led by economist Arvind Panagariya, is currently reviewing the proposals while awaiting the Centre's stance on the revenue-sharing formula. The final report is expected to be submitted by October 31, 2025, with the new recommendations set to take effect from fiscal year 2026-27. The Finance Commission, constituted every five years, determines the tax distribution between the Centre and states. At present, states receive 41% of the total tax pool in 14 instalments annually, a framework that remains in place until 2026. In September 2024, five opposition-ruled states—Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Telangana—urged the commission to raise the state share to 50%, arguing that the Centre's reliance on surcharges and cesses limits state revenues. Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan had emphasized that a higher tax share was crucial to ensuring financial stability for states. During the tenure of the 15th Finance Commission, the Centre had proposed reducing states' tax shares, a stance that remains a contentious issue. The 16th Finance Commission's final recommendations will play a critical role in shaping fiscal federalism ahead of the next budget cycle.

## Coal India to Levy ₹300 Per Tonne Extra for Northern Coalfields' Output From May 1

Coal India Ltd (CIL) announced that starting May 1, 2025, it will impose an additional charge of ₹300 per tonne on coal produced from Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL), a wholly owned subsidiary. This "Singrauli Punarasthan Charge" will be levied uniformly across all NCL mines, adding to the existing notified coal prices. The company estimates that this move will generate ₹3,877.50 crore in additional revenue. For the third quarter ending December 2024, CIL reported a consolidated profit of



₹8,506 crore, down from ₹10,253 crore in the same period the previous year. Revenue from operations also declined slight-

ly to ₹35,779.74 crore, compared to ₹36,154 crore in Q3 FY24. Despite the revenue dip, the company's earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) stood at ₹12,317 crore, marking a 5% decline year-on-year but exceeding market expectations of ₹11,407.8 crore. The EBITDA margin contracted from 35.9% to 34.4%. Following the announcement, Coal India shares closed 0.73% higher at ₹363.85 on the BSE, while the benchmark Sensex recorded a marginal 0.01% gain.

## Bajaj Auto Enters Electric Auto Market With GoGo Brand

Bajaj Auto Ltd has launched Bajaj GoGo, a new brand dedicated to electric three-wheelers, marking its foray into the growing electric mobility segment. The company has introduced three variants under this brand—P5009, P5012, and P7012—designed for both passenger and cargo applications. The naming strategy follows a structured format: 'P' stands for passenger, the first two digits represent the vehicle size, and the last two digits indicate the battery capacity—9 kWh and 12 kWh. Speaking at the launch, Samardeep Subandh, President of Bajaj Auto's Intra-City Business Unit, stated, "The all-electric Bajaj GoGo range will set new benchmarks in this segment. With a certified range of up to 251 km, segment-first features, and Bajaj's trusted reliability and service, GoGo offers a



comprehensive solution for maximizing earnings while minimizing downtime and maintenance. The next time you need a ride, hail a Bajaj GoGo!" Bajaj GoGo comes with several first-in-segment features, including a two-speed automated transmission for better efficiency and hill-climbing capability. Other advanced features include Auto Hazard and Anti-Roll Detection, LED lighting, and Hill Hold Assist. The P5009 is priced at ₹3,26,797 (ex-showroom), while the P7012 is available for ₹3,83,004. Bookings for Bajaj GoGo electric autos are now open at authorized dealerships across India.

## Vodafone Idea Begins 5G Trials in Mumbai, Offers Unlimited Data

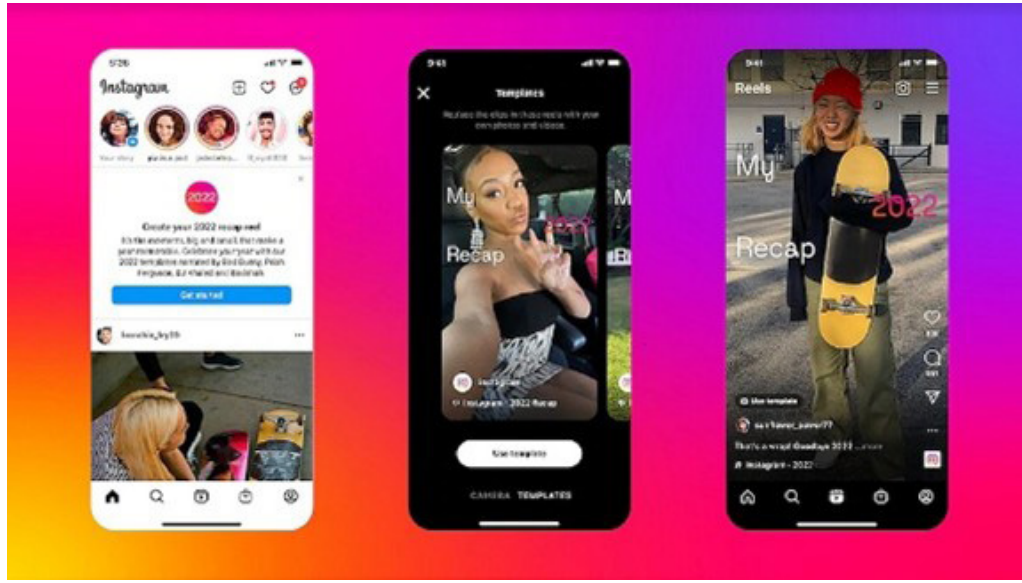
Vodafone Idea (Vi) has reportedly started trial runs of its 5G network in Mumbai, ahead of its commercial rollout. Several users have shared screenshots of 5G activation messages, in-app notifications, and 5G network icons appearing on their smartphones. According to reports, the company has enabled 5G connectivity for a limited number of users in the city. Some users have claimed download speeds exceeding 250Mbps, while others reported speeds of around 200Mbps with 20Mbps upload speeds. However, the Voice over New Radio (VoNR) feature, which enables voice calls over 5G networks, is not yet available. Users have also received messages from Vi confirming the activation of 5G services, along with an introductory unlimited data offer for users on recharge packs of ₹299 or above. The 5G network is currently live only in Mumbai, with Navi Mumbai, Thane, and Kalyan expected to get coverage soon. Vi has also announced plans to roll out 5G services in Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Patna starting April 2025.

With this move, Vodafone Idea is finally catching up with rivals Airtel and Jio, both of whom launched their 5G services in 2022-23. The company's Q3 2024-25 report had earlier confirmed that a commercial launch of 5G was in the pipeline.

## Instagram Plans Standalone App for Reels to Compete in Short-Form Video Space

Instagram is reportedly considering the launch of a standalone app dedicated to its short-form video content, Reels. This new app, internally referred to as "Project Ray," would aim to enter the competitive short-form video market currently dominated by TikTok, the popular video platform owned by ByteDance. The app is expected to feature Reels alongside three-minute videos, offering a vertically scrolling experience similar to that of TikTok.

According to a report from \*The Information\*, Instagram's head, Adam Mosseri, informed staff about the potential app that would enhance user recommendations, particularly for new and existing users in the United States. While Instagram has not officially confirmed the development, the move comes at a time when TikTok faces mounting regulatory scrutiny in the U.S. The platform was recently at risk of a ban, although the decision was later reversed with a temporary extension, allowing TikTok to operate in the U.S. until April 5, 2025. Talks are also reportedly underway between TikTok's parent company and the new U.S. administration, potentially involving a partnership with an American



company to maintain the app's availability in the country.

This proposed Reels app would mark Instagram's second new app launch of 2025, following the debut of the Edits app last month. The Edits app offers mobile video editing tools designed to give creators more precision and creativity than the current editing features available on Instagram. Available exclusively on iOS for now, Edits includes

high-quality video capture, draft management, and customizable camera settings for resolution, frame rate, and dynamic range.

If the Reels app comes to fruition, it will solidify Instagram's ongoing efforts to compete more effectively in the fast-growing short-form video market, tapping into the growing demand for bite-sized content that has made TikTok a global sensation.

## Barber Returns Rs 20,000 Given During Covid, Man's Post Goes Viral



A heartwarming story has gone viral after a man shared how his barber returned Rs 20,000 he had given to him during the difficult days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rohit Aryan, an entrepreneur, took to social media on Tuesday to recount the touching gesture that took place years after he had helped his barber in 2021.

According to Aryan, the barber had lost a family member during the pandem-

ic and was in dire need of money. In a selfless act of kindness, Aryan gave him Rs 20,000 without expecting anything in return. Aryan expressed that he had never asked for the money back and simply wanted to help his barber in a time of need.

Years later, to Aryan's surprise, the barber returned the entire amount. In his post on X (formerly Twitter), Aryan wrote, "I gave my salon wale bhaiya Rs

20k during the Covid time. For obvious reasons. Someone died in his family back in 2021. He needed help. It was a bad phase for many."

He went on to say, "I somehow knew that I would not get this amount back and I never asked for this, but today he gave the amount back to me. And said a big thank you again." Aryan tried to insist that the money was his gift, but the barber insisted, "Bhaiya apko lena hi padega (you must take it)." Aryan acknowledged the barber's sincerity, saying, "Some people know how to keep their word."

The story touched many hearts online, with users praising the kindness and trust displayed by both individuals. One user commented, "Both of you have made the world a slightly better place with your acts of kindness and trust." Others shared similar sentiments, saying that it was rare to come across such honest people these days.

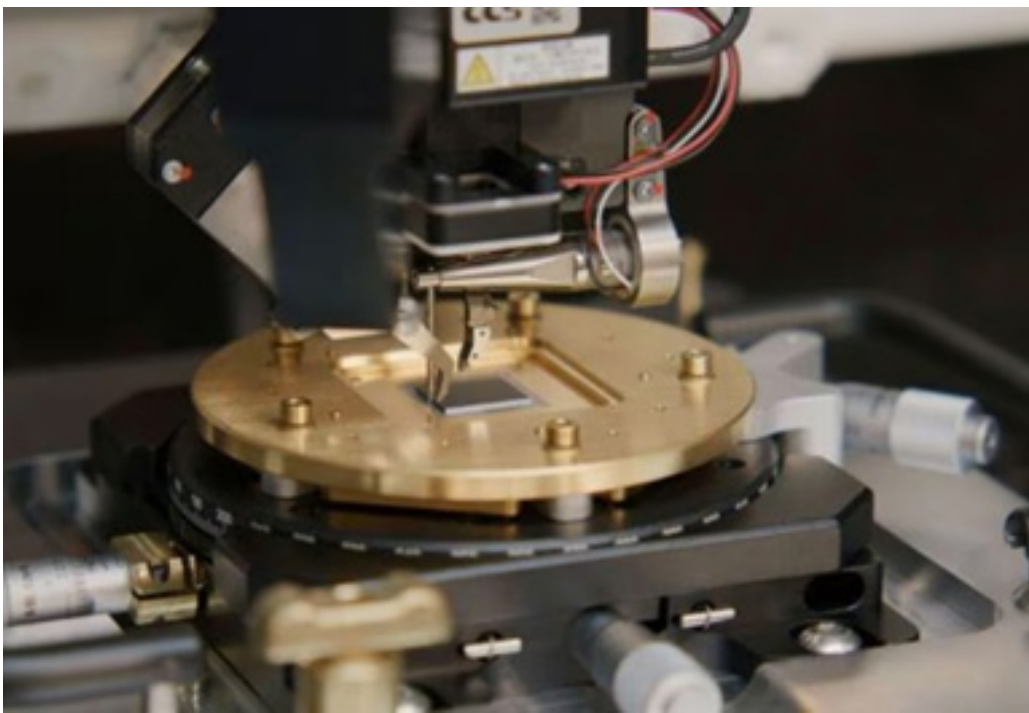
This heartwarming exchange of kindness reminds us of the positive impact that small acts of generosity can have on others, even when they are not expected in return.

## Amazon Unveils First-Ever In-House Quantum Computing Chip, Ocelot

On February 27, Amazon introduced its first-ever in-house quantum computing chip, named Ocelot. The tech giant revealed that the Ocelot chip has been designed to help enhance the efficiency of quantum computing hardware systems. This development marks a significant step for Amazon as it enters the quantum computing space with a custom-built solution.

Ocelot is a nine-qubit chip, which has been internally developed and fabricated by Amazon. The company claims that one of the standout features of Ocelot is its potential to drastically reduce the costs associated with quantum error correction—by as much as 90 percent compared to current methods. This improvement could pave the way for more practical and scalable quantum computing solutions in the future.

Quantum computing has long been viewed as a promising but complex technology, with error correction being one of its major challenges. Traditional quantum systems face a significant hurdle in maintaining the integrity of quantum states due to noise and errors. By reducing the costs of error correction, Ocelot could make quantum computing more feasible for a range of applications, potentially accelerating progress in fields such as cryptography, artificial



intelligence, and complex simulations. Amazon's introduction of Ocelot also demonstrates its commitment to advancing quantum technologies, joining a growing list of tech giants investing heavily in quantum computing research. While the field is still in its early stages, the unveiling of this chip highlights Amazon's ambition to be at the forefront of quantum hardware development.

With Ocelot, Amazon has made a crucial leap in its quantum computing journey, showing promise for more efficient hardware systems that could push the boundaries of what's possible in quantum research and practical applications. As the company continues to refine its quantum technology, Ocelot could become a key player in shaping the future of computing.

## Indians Prioritize Work Over Self-Care in 2024, Reveals Time Use Survey



Indians spent more time working and less on self-care in 2024, according to the latest Time Use Survey released by the government. The survey, which tracks how people allocate their time across various activities, found that the participation of both men and women in employment-related tasks rose significantly. For men, the participation increased to 75% in 2024, up from 70.9% in 2019. For women, it rose to 25%, compared to 21.8% in 2019.

The survey also revealed a decline in the time Indians spend on self-care and maintenance. Over the past five years, the average time dedicated to these activities dropped by 2%. The survey, first conducted in 2019, assesses both paid and unpaid work, including caregiving, household chores, volunteer work, learning, and leisure. Key findings from the 2024 survey, which covered 4.54 lakh individuals across 1.39 lakh households, include:

- 41% of Indians aged six and above participated in employment or related activities, a rise of nearly 3 percentage points since 2019. On average, people spent 440 minutes a day on

- work-related tasks.
- Time spent on unpaid domestic services decreased by 2%, with women spending an average of 289 minutes per day on these activities, while men spent 88 minutes.

- When it came to caregiving, men spent an average of 75 minutes daily, while women spent nearly double that—137 minutes.

- A high percentage of children, 89.3%, aged 6-14 years participated in learning activities, spending an average of 413 minutes a day on education.

- People spent an average of 171 minutes a day on cultural, leisure, and media-related activities, with males spending slightly more (177 minutes) than females (164 minutes).
- Socialising, community participation, and religious activities saw a slight decline in time spent, with individuals spending five minutes less compared to 2019, averaging 130 minutes per day.

These findings highlight the evolving work-life balance in India, with increasing work participation and decreasing time for personal and family care.

## Biryani ATM: India's First Automated Biryani Outlet Launched In Chennai

Biryani is a beloved dish across India, and now, Chennai has taken the experience of ordering this iconic meal to a whole new level. 'The BVK Biryani' outlet, located in Kolattur, has introduced a vending machine that offers customers the convenience of ordering fresh biryanis without the hassle of waiting in line or interacting with a cashier.

This unique concept by Bai Veetu Kalyanam (BVK) Biryani allows customers to place their orders through a 32-inch touchscreen display. With a variety of Biryani options available, customers can easily browse the menu, select their favorite dish, and make payment via card or UPI. Once the order is placed, a countdown timer begins, showing the preparation time. The freshly packed Biryani is then delivered at a counter, allowing customers to quickly grab their order and continue on their way.

The idea behind this vending machine is to offer a fast, contactless, and efficient biryani experience, making it easier for those crav-

ing this popular dish to enjoy it without the wait or the need for interaction. With no cash counter or person to explain the order to, the process is seamless and quick. It's perfect for customers on the go who want high-quality, wedding-style Biryani, prepared with fresh farm-to-fork meat in just a few hours.

The innovation has caught attention online, with many appreciating the convenience and the modern touch added to the traditional Biryani experience. BVK Biryani's vending machine provides not only a solution for those craving a quick and tasty meal but also a glimpse into how technology is shaping the future of food service.



## Poymantee Baisya Clinches Silver in Mixed Doubles at WTT Feeder Cappadocia 2025

Indian table tennis star Poymantee Baisya, alongside partner Akash Pal, won a silver medal in the mixed doubles category at the WTT Feeder Cappadocia 2025 held in Turkiye from February 17 to 21. The duo had an impressive run, starting with a 3-1 win over Poland's Katarzyna Wegryzn and Mateusz Zalewski. They maintained their momentum with another 3-1 victory over Hong Kong's Li Hon Ming and Wong Hoi Tung in the quarter-finals. In the semi-finals, they defeated Korea Republic's Cho Seungmin and Yoo Siwoo 3-1. However, they fell short in the final, losing 1-3 to China's Xue Fei and Han Feier.

Baisya, 22, expressed her gratitude for the support of her coaches, family, and Adani Sportsline. She credited the Garv Hai initiative, which she has been part of since 2024, for playing a key role in her growth as an athlete. Adani Sportsline's Sanjay Adesara congratulated Baisya, emphasizing their continued support in her journey.



## Meghalaya CM Felicitates Medal Winners of 37th National Games 2025

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Wednesday honored the state's five medal winners from the 37th National Games 2025 held in Uttarakhand. The athletes were celebrated for their impressive achievements: gold medalist Vikash Rana, silver medalists Elizabeth Vincent and Indra Sharma, and bronze medalists Pynshngain Kurbah, Kiran Devi, and B. Anandhi. The Chief Minister also acknowledged coach Ian Vincent for his vital role in guiding the team to success. CM Sangma emphasized the government's commitment to sports development, highlighting investments in infrastructure since 2018 to enhance facilities and training opportunities for athletes. He also pointed to Meghalaya's selection as the host of the 39th National Games in 2027, which would further strengthen the state's sports ecosystem. Additionally, the CM launched the Meghalaya Sports Action Plan 2025-32 and the Chief Minister's Football Mission, aimed at bolstering sports development. Cash awards were presented to athletes and sportspersons who have garnered national and international recognition for the state.

## Pakistan's Champions Trophy Campaign Ends with No Wins as Rain Cancels Bangladesh Match



Pakistan's Champions Trophy campaign concluded without a victory after their final match against Bangladesh was called off due to heavy rain at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. Both teams were already out of contention following defeats to New Zealand and India. The persistent downpour left the field soaked, with the match officials deciding to abandon the game after nearly two hours of waiting, leaving both sides with one point each. Pakistan faced criticism for their lackluster performance, with captain Mohammad Rizwan expressing disappointment over the team's failure to meet expectations. Injuries to key players like Fakhar Zaman and Saim Ayub, along with pressure against India, were cited as contributing factors. Assistant coach Azhar Mahmood emphasized the need to adapt and take responsibility, hoping the team would learn from their mistakes ahead of their upcoming tour to New Zealand. Bangladesh, also winless, echoed similar sentiments and looked forward to improving their bowling attack.



## Sciver-Brunt and Matthews Shine as MI Crush UPW by 8 Wickets

Nat Sciver-Brunt and Hayley Matthews led Mumbai Indians to an emphatic 8-wicket win over UP Warriorz in the Women's Premier League in Bengaluru on Wednesday. After opting to bowl first, MI restricted UPW to 142/9, with Sciver-Brunt claiming 3/18. The England all-rounder continued her dominance with the bat, scoring an unbeaten 75 off 44 balls, while Matthews supported with 59 off 50. Their 133-run partnership guided MI to a comfortable victory in just 17 overs. Earlier, UPW's innings began with an aggressive 79-run stand between Grace Harris (46) and Vrinda Dinesh (33). However, they suffered a dramatic collapse, losing four wickets for 12 runs. Sciver-Brunt, Sanskriti Gupta (2/11), and Shabnim Ismail (2/33) starred with the ball, as UPW lost their way. With this victory, MI secured their third consecutive win, moving to the top of the standings, while UPW languished in fourth place.

# ICC Champions Trophy 2025 Points Table

### GROUP A

No	Teams	P	W	L	T	NR	PTS	NRR
1	NZ	2	2	0	0	0	4	+0.863
2	IND	2	2	0	0	0	4	+0.647
3	BAN	3	0	2	0	1	1	-0.443
4	PAK	3	0	2	0	1	1	-1.087

### GROUP B

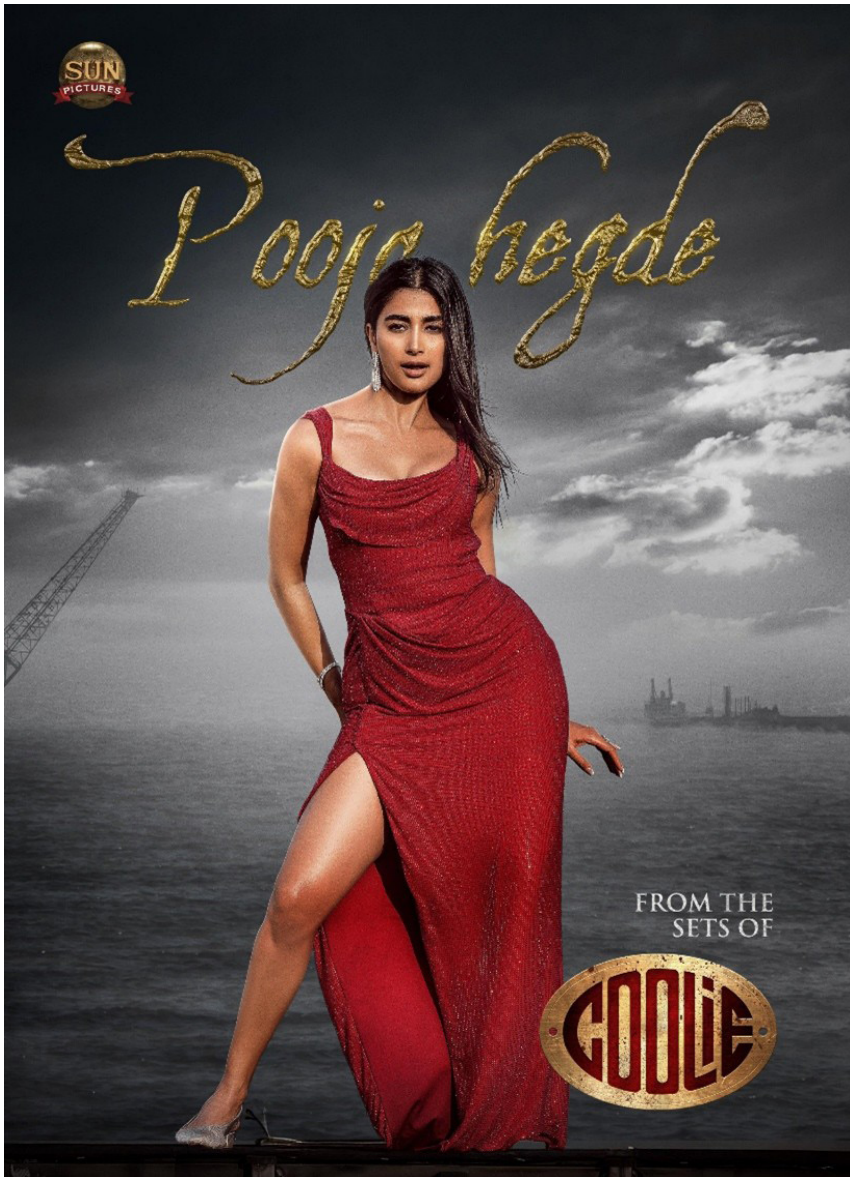
No	Teams	P	W	L	T	NR	PTS	NRR
1	SA	2	1	0	0	1	3	+2.140
2	AUS	2	1	0	0	1	3	+0.475
3	AFG	2	1	1	0	0	2	-0.990
4	ENG	2	0	2	0	0	0	-0.305

**P : Played**  
**W : Win**  
**L : Loss**  
**T : Tie**  
**NR : No Results**  
**NRR : Net Run Rate**  
**PTS : Points**

**Win : 2 points**  
**Tie, No Result or abandoned : 1 point**  
**Loss : 0 point**



## Pooja Hegde's First Look from Rajinikanth's 'Koolie' Released



Pooja Hegde is making waves in Kollywood with a series of exciting offers. After earning a strong foothold in Tollywood, the Kannada actress is now capturing attention in Tamil cinema. The makers of the highly anticipated film Koolie, starring the legendary Rajinikanth and directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, have released Pooja Hegde's first look. In the film, she will be performing an item song, and her presence has already generated significant buzz.

Sun Pictures is producing the film, which also stars big names like Nagarjuna, Upenendra, Sathyaraj, and Shruti Haasan in key roles. Along with her appearance in Koolie, Pooja is also set to star alongside Tamil superstar Vijay in the film Nayagan. Her growing prominence in Kollywood is a testament to her expanding presence across various Indian film industries.

## Shekar Kammula's 'Kubera' Release Date Announced with an Intriguing Poster



Director Shekar Kammula's pan-India film Kubera, featuring Nagarjuna, Dhanush, and Rashmika Mandanna in pivotal roles, is all set for a grand release. The makers recently revealed the film's release date, confirming that Kubera will hit the screens on June 20. The announcement was made through an exciting poster that piqued the audience's curiosity. The film, which is being produced under the banner of Sri Venkateswara Cinemas LLP by Sunil Narang and Ram Mohan Rao, promises to offer a unique social drama. Dhanush is expected to showcase a fresh look in the film, which is backed by Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad's music. The first-look posters of the lead stars, along with Rashmika's character glimpses and teaser, have already raised expectations.

## 'Mad Square' Teaser Released with High Expectations



The teaser for Mad Square, the sequel to the 2023 hit Mad, has been released, generating massive excitement

among audiences. Starring Naren Nithin, Ram Nithin and Sangeeth Shoban in lead roles, the film promises an-

other dose of comedy and entertainment. Directed by Kalyan Shankar, Mad Square follows the success of Mad, which became a superhit, fueling high expectations for this sequel. The newly released teaser showcases the trio's impeccable comic timing and has already impressed fans. The film, set for release on March 29, is expected to bring more laughter and fun to the screen. Music for the film is composed by Bheems Ceciroleo. Mad Square is produced by Sitara Entertainment, Fortune Four Cinemas, and Sreeker Studios.

## Geetha Arts to Release 'Chhava' in Telugu on March 7

Geetha Arts has announced the Telugu release date of the blockbuster film Chhava, which is based on the life of the great Maratha warrior, Sambhaji Maharaj. Directed by Lakshman Utkar and starring Vicky Kaushal and Rashmika Mandanna, the film has been a massive hit since its release on February 14. It has already grossed over Rs. 500 crores at the box office in just 12 days.

Due to overwhelming demand from Telugu audiences, Geetha Arts has decided to release the film in Telugu on March 7. The historical epic, which has gained widespread popularity, will now roar in Telugu theaters, showcasing the valor of Sambhaji Maharaj. The makers have released a special poster along with the announcement of the release date.



## 'Mazaka' Movie Review: A Routine Entertainment with Missed Potential

Sundeep Kishan's latest film Mazaka, directed by Thrinadha Rao Nakkina, attempts to provide a family entertainer but falls short of expectations. The film features Sundeep Kishan, Rao Ramesh, Ritu Varma, and Anshu in key roles, with a storyline revolving around the father-son duo, Krishna (Sundeep Kishan) and Venkat Ramana (Rao Ramesh). After the loss of his wife, Venkat Ramana takes on the responsibility of raising Krishna, and the film follows their emotional and comedic journey as they both fall in love. While the film has a decent premise, it struggles with routine comedy sequences and lacks emotional depth. The repetitive scenes fail to gen-



erate the expected fun and excitement, and though there are some emotional moments, they are not enough to save the film. Rao Ramesh's performance stands out, delivering a few emotional dialogues that resonate with the audience. However,

the film's overall pace and storytelling feel dragged. Despite its promising concept, Mazaka fails to deliver a satisfactory entertainment experience. The film's lack of fresh scenes and compelling emotional beats leads to a disappointing view-

ing experience. With a rating of 2.00 out of 5, Mazaka is a missed opportunity in the family drama genre. Rating: 2.00/5  
Release Date: February 26, 2025  
Director: Thrinadha Rao Nakkina

## 'Shiva Shiva Shankara' Song from 'Kannappa' Goes Viral on Social Media



The song Shiva Shiva Shankara from the upcoming film Kannappa, starring Manchu Vishnu in the lead role, has

become a chartbuster and is trending on social media. Released as part of this grand project directed by Mukesh Kumar

Singh, the song has garnered massive attention, particularly during this Maha Shivaratri. With over 80 million views and more than 200,000 reels on Instagram, the song has struck a chord with audiences of all ages. From children to adults, people are showcasing their devotion through reels, making Shiva Shiva Shankara a social media sensation.

Manchu Vishnu, the producer and lead actor, expressed his joy over the song's success, stating that he never anticipated such a response but is grateful for the overwhelming support. The movie, which also features Prabhas as Rudra and Akshay Kumar as Lord Shiva, will be released worldwide on April 25. Along with Vishnu, the film stars Mohan Babu, Mohanlal, and Kajal Aggarwal in key roles. The film's grand release is highly anticipated.