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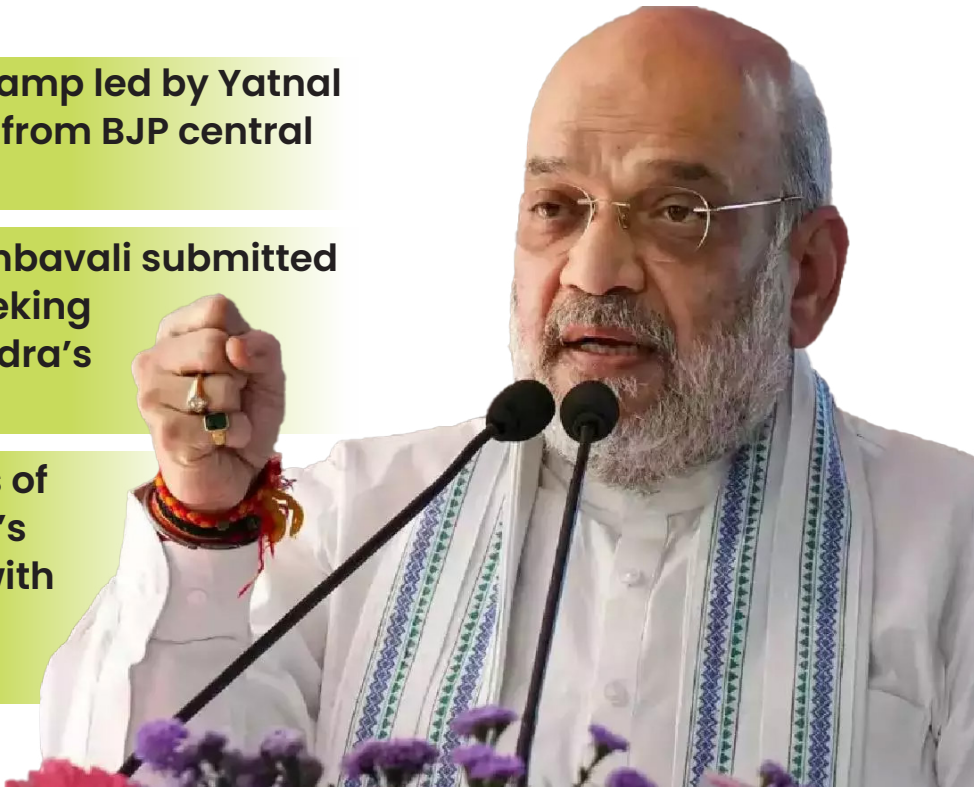
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Karnataka BJP Rebels Hopeful of Meeting Amit Shah Soon

Dissident camp led by Yatnal awaits call from BJP central leadership

Aravind Limbavali submitted petition seeking B Y Vijayendra's removal

Allegations of Vijayendra's close ties with Congress leaders



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The faction within Karnataka BJP, led by senior leader Basangouda Patil Yatnal, is expecting a meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi this week. The dissidents, who have been vocal about their dissatisfaction with state BJP president B Y Vijayendra, believe that their concerns will be heard by the party's top brass soon.

Speculation about BJP's central leadership engaging with the rebels intensified after Aravind Limbavali recently met Shah and handed over a four-page petition seeking Vijayendra's removal. The petition reportedly accuses Vijayendra of maintaining close ties with Congress leaders and failing to effectively counter the ruling par-

ty in the Assembly.

A senior leader from the rebel camp confirmed to TPN that they anticipate a call from Delhi by Tuesday or Wednesday. "We are hoping that they will finalize a date for discussions with the party's high command," the leader said. Meanwhile, another dissident leader, Ramesh Jarkiholi, met Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Bengaluru during BJP MP Tejasvi Surya's wedding reception, adding another layer of intrigue to the ongoing rift within the Karnataka BJP.

With internal tensions brewing, all eyes are now on the BJP's central leadership to see whether they will intervene and address the growing dissent within the state unit.

- **BBMP to be split into up to seven corporations**
- **Greater Bengaluru Authority to oversee coordination**
- **BJP demands elections instead of restructuring**



Karnataka Assembly Passes Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill Amid BJP Protest

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Assembly on Monday passed the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill amid strong opposition from the BJP. The Bill aims to restructure the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) by dividing it into a maximum of seven city corporations in the Greater Bengaluru Area. It also proposes the formation of a Greater Bengaluru Authority for coordination and supervision, along with a 30-month term for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, who tabled the Bill, defended the move, stating that the decentralization of power would strengthen Bengaluru's administration. "We are not destroying Bengaluru as the opposition claims. We are giving it a new direction," he said. However, the BJP strongly opposed the Bill, with Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka calling it an insult to former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who aimed to empower local bodies.

He argued that the move could set a precedent for other regions to demand similar divisions. Yelahanka BJP MLA S.R. Vishwanath questioned the need for splitting the BBMP when a Chief Commissioner had been managing the city for years without an elected body. "If decentralization is truly the goal, hold elections instead of dividing Bengaluru," he asserted. He also suggested that any restructuring should follow the delimitation of Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies.

Despite the opposition, the ruling Congress pushed forward with the Bill, emphasizing its commitment to better urban governance. The passage of the Bill marks a major shift in Bengaluru's administrative structure, with the government aiming to enhance efficiency through localized governance. However, the BJP remains firm in its demand for elections to allow an elected body to take charge of the city's affairs.

Karnataka Govt Has No Information on Ranya Rao's Gold Smuggling Case: Home Minister

- **Minister Parameshwara says no official communication from DRI, CBI**
- **Allegations of police protocol misuse for the actress under scrutiny**
- **BJP raises concerns over suspected political involvement**

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara told the Assembly on Monday that the state government has no official information regarding the gold smuggling case involving Kannada actress Ranya Rao, as no communication has been received from the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) or the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Responding to a question from BJP MLA Sunil Kumar during Zero Hour, Parameshwara clarified that the case falls under the jurisdiction of central agencies. "The DRI and CBI operate independently, and the administration of international airports is not under the state government's control. However, we are not denying that gold smuggling has taken place," he said.



The minister acknowledged allegations that Ranya Rao's stepfather, a senior DGP-ranked officer, may have facilitated her activities, and that state police allegedly extended her protocol privileges. "This will be investigated at the state level, and if any police lapses are found, necessary action will be taken," he added.

BJP leaders, including Leader of Opposition R Ashoka, questioned why state police provided security and vehicles for Rao, demanding a CBI probe into possible political connections. Kumar accused the government of shielding influential figures, citing media reports linking two state ministers to the case.

Ranya Rao was arrested by the DRI on March 3 upon arrival from Dubai, with gold worth ₹12.56 crore seized at Bengaluru airport. Further raids recovered gold jewelry worth ₹2.06 crore and ₹2.67 crore in cash from her residence.

Parameshwara assured the Assembly that if the CBI finds ministerial involvement, appropriate action will follow. However, he reiterated that the state government has no direct role in the ongoing investigation.

India's First Privately Built LCA Rear Fuselage Handed Over to HAL

- **Alpha Tocol delivers first rear fuselage for LCA Mk1A**
- **Rajnath Singh calls it a milestone in defence manufacturing**
- **HAL to integrate private sector-built modules for IAF deliveries**

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh presided over the handover of India's first privately manufactured rear fuselage for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Mk1A to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Bengaluru. The fuselage, produced by Alpha Tocol Engineering Services Private Limited, marks a significant step in India's self-reliance in defence production. Speaking at the event, Singh hailed the occasion as a milestone in India's defence manufacturing journey, emphasizing the importance of public-private collaboration. "This achievement reflects India's commitment to Aatmanirbharta and strengthens our armed forces with advanced indigenous platforms," he stated.



The rear fuselage, a crucial component supporting the aircraft's tail section, will now be integrated into the LCA Mk1A, bolstering HAL's production capabilities. Singh likened HAL to the backbone of India's aerospace sector, with private companies like L&T, Tata Advanced Systems, and VEM Technologies playing a supportive role akin to the rear fuselage.

HAL has already manufactured 12 LCA Mk1A rear fuselages, which are in various stages of production. The latest addition from a private sector supplier will enable HAL to ramp up deliveries to the Indian Air Force from 2025-26.

The event was attended by Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, MP Sudhanshu Trivedi, and senior officials from HAL and the defence sector.

Former CM Basavaraj Bommai Clarifies Land Allotment to Ranya Rao's Firm

- **Industrial Minister-led panel approved land allocation**
- **Investment proposal of ₹138 crore cleared in 2023**
- **Bommai denies involvement, calls for CBI probe**

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Former Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Monday clarified that the decision to allocate industrial land to Ksiro-da India, a company in which Kannada actor Ranya Rao was a majority shareholder, was taken by the then Industrial Minister Murugesh Nirani in 2023. Rao was recently arrested in connection with a gold smuggling case. Basavaraj Bommai stated that investment proposals up to



₹500 crore were handled by a high-power committee chaired by the Industrial Minister, while proposals exceeding that amount were reviewed by a committee headed by the Chief Minister.

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New twist in Ranya Rao gold smuggling case

Actress' firm pledged ₹138 cr investment on government-allotted land



- **Karnataka's KIADB confirmed Ranya Rao's firm received 12 acres for a steel plant in Feb 2023**
- **Land allotment was made under the previous BJP government**
- **Actress arrested for smuggling gold worth ₹12.56 crore from Dubai**
- **Authorities seized assets worth ₹17.29 crore, including cash and jewellery**
- **Political controversy emerges over land allotment and high-profile connections**

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Karnataka Govt Introduces Safety Protocol Handbook for Women Doctors

- Exclusive 'Violet Book' to ensure safety of women healthcare professionals
- Stronger security, emergency response systems in hospitals
- Government prioritizing strict enforcement of safety measures

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a decisive move to enhance the security of female healthcare professionals, the Karnataka government has introduced a new safety protocol handbook, the 'Violet Book.' This initiative comes in response to growing concerns over the safety of women in the medical field, especially after the recent tragic rape and murder of a doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Institute. The state's healthcare system, spanning over 6,000 village panchayats, 30 district hospitals, 175 taluk hospitals, and 60 medical colleges, employs thousands of doctors, nurses, and support staff. Around 30% of these professionals are women, many of whom serve in remote areas and work night shifts. Speaking exclusively to The New Indian Express, Principal Secretary of Medical Education



Mohammed Mohsin revealed that the 'Violet Book' was developed in consultation with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil. It will establish statewide security guidelines for women doctors, nurses, and hospital staff. Mohsin emphasized the need for effective implementation of these measures. "It is not enough to have policies; they must be enforced rigorously to ensure that every woman healthcare professional feels protected at all times," he said.

As part of this initiative, the government is rolling out:

- Enhanced security in hospitals and healthcare centers
- Mandatory safety protocols for women working night shifts
- Emergency response systems and dedicated helplines
- Strict action against harassment and violence in medical institutions

By prioritizing these reforms, Karnataka is setting a strong precedent for women's safety in healthcare, reinforcing the message that those who dedicate their lives to saving others should never have to fear for their own.

Karnataka Govt to Tighten Security at Tourist Spots After Hampi Assault - HM Parameshwara

- Security review ordered after Hampi rape case
- Government to inform US and Israeli embassies
- Crackdown on crimes targeting tourists

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Following the brutal rape of two women near Hampi and the tragic drowning of a male tourist, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara announced that security at tourist destinations will be strengthened. The government is re-evaluating existing safety measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

Parameshwara acknowledged the negative impact of such crimes on tourism, stating, "While we are working to attract more tourists, incidents like these create fear. We are taking this matter seriously and will ensure justice is served." He also assured that foreign embassies, including those of the US and Israel, have been informed to facilitate the safe return of affected tourists.

Recounting the incident, he explained that four tourists, including two foreign nationals, had stepped out of their homestay when three



men approached them, pretending to need directions to a fuel station. The attackers robbed, assaulted, and raped two women, while pushing an Odisha-based male tourist into the Tungabhadra canal, where he drowned. His body was recovered two days later. The police have arrested the accused and recorded the survivors' statements.

Third Accused Sai Ram Arrested in Tamil Nadu Over Hampi Rape Case

- Crime involved rape, murder, and attempted drowning of tourists
- Home Minister to review the case with senior officials

TPN Correspondent | Koppal

The Koppal police have arrested the third accused, Sai Ram (23), in connection with the horrific rape and murder incident near Hampi. He was tracked down in Tamil Nadu and apprehended with the support of the Tamil Nadu police. A special team is currently bringing him back to Koppal for further legal proceedings. The crime, which occurred on March 6 at Sanapur, sent shockwaves across the region. Three accused targeted a group



of tourists, raping two women, including an Israeli national. They then pushed three male tourists into the Tungabhadra canal. Tragically, 22-year-old Bibash, a tourist from Odisha, drowned, while the other two managed to escape.

In response, the Koppal police formed six special teams to trace the culprits. Two of the accused, Mallesh and Chetan Sai, were arrested soon after the incident, while Sai Ram had been on the run until his arrest in Tamil Nadu.

The state government has taken the case seriously, with Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara set

to meet senior officials from Koppal and Vijayanagara districts in Bengaluru this week to review the investigation.

Meanwhile, Koppal district in-charge minister Shivaraj Tangadagi urged tourists to exercise caution and avoid certain areas at night due to the presence of wildlife, including leopards and sloth bears. He also announced measures to enhance security, including the installation of CCTV cameras in legal resorts and frequently visited tourist spots.

The shocking attack has raised serious concerns about tourist safety in Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage site that attracts visitors from across the globe. Authorities have assured swift action against the accused while implementing steps to prevent such incidents in the future.

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Former CM Basavaraj Bommai Clarifies Land Allotment to Ranya Rao's Firm

an investment of ₹138 crore, the decision to allot land was made by Nirani's committee, Basavaraj Bommai asserted. Defending the BJP government's move, Basavaraj Bommai explained that all investment proposals underwent scrutiny by a committee led by the Principal Secretary of the Heavy and Medium Industries Department before reaching the ministerial panel. "The government always aims to attract investors, and land is allotted in good faith. However, if investors fail to meet commitments, the law provides mechanisms to address such cases," he said.

He also clarified that in this particular case, the allotted land was not handed over as the company failed to make the required payment. Basavaraj Bommai distanced himself from the matter, emphasizing that the established process was followed. Calling for a detailed probe into the gold smuggling case, Basavaraj Bommai suggested that only a CBI investigation could reveal the extent of alleged ministerial involvement. The case has triggered political debate, with the opposition demanding accountability over land allocations during the previous regime.

New twist in Ranya Rao gold smuggling case

TPN Correspondent, Karnataka
The gold smuggling case involving Kannada actress Ranya Rao has taken a new turn with revelations that her company, Ksiroda India Pvt Ltd, was allotted 12 acres of land by the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) in February 2023 under the previous BJP government. The company had pledged an investment of ₹138 crore to set up a steel plant at Sira Industrial Area in Tumakuru district.

Ranya Rao was arrested by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on March 3 at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, for allegedly smuggling gold worth ₹12.56 crore from Dubai. Further searches at her residence led to the seizure of ₹2.67 crore in cash and ₹2.06 crore worth of gold jewellery. In total, authorities confiscated assets valued at ₹17.29 crore, dealing a major blow to the organized gold smuggling network.

Minister for Medium and Large Industries M B Patil's office released documents confirming the land allocation, fueling a political debate over the decision made before the Congress came to power in May 2023. According to KIADB CEO Mahesh, the allotment was approved in January 2023 during the 137th State Level Single Window Clearance Committee (SLS-WCC) meeting. The steel plant project was expected to generate 160 jobs.

Adding to the controversy, Ranya is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Ramachandra Rao, chairman and managing director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. With her arrest and the discovery of high-value assets, the case has taken on political dimensions, raising questions about land allotments and alleged misuse of power.

Land Acquisition Begins for Sharavathi Pumped Storage Project Amid Opposition

- 400 acres, including 133 acres of forest, marked for acquisition
- Environmentalists threaten legal action against the project
- KPCL aims to generate 2,000 MW using existing reservoirs

TPN Correspondent | Shivamogga

The land acquisition process for the Sharavathi pumped storage project in Sagar taluk has begun, sparking strong opposition from environmentalists. The project, proposed within the Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary, requires 400 acres of land, including 133.81 acres of forest.

Former Karnataka State Western Ghat Task Force chairman Ananth Hegde Ashisara condemned the project, calling it "bogus" and a scheme to misuse public funds. He noted that while the project has received approval from the State Board of Wildlife, it still awaits clearance from the National Board of



Wildlife and the Union Ministry of Forests. A central team must visit the site before granting approval.

Environmental activists warn that the project, which involves constructing tunnels spanning 7 km between the Talakalale and Gerusoppa reservoirs, will lead to massive deforestation and irreversible ecological damage. "Blasting and drilling in the forest will severely impact biodiversity. Additionally, villagers in Shivamogga and Uttara

Kannada districts have not been informed, leaving them unaware of the implications," Ashisara said. A letter has been sent to the National Board of Wildlife urging officials to reject the proposal.

Meanwhile, Sagar Assistant Commissioner R Yatish assured that maximum compensation would be provided to affected families. At a recent meeting, he urged

villagers of Gundibailu and Marathikeri to cooperate, stating that the power project is essential for national energy needs.

According to Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL), the 2,000-MW project will use the Talakalale dam as an upper reservoir and the Gerusoppa dam as a lower reservoir, employing pumped storage technology to optimize electricity generation during peak demand.

Bengaluru Airport Introduces India's First Sensory Room for Neurodivergent Passengers

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a landmark step toward inclusive air travel, Kempegowda International Airport (BLR Airport) has become the first in India to introduce a sensory room, catering to neurodivergent passengers and individuals with sensory sensitivities. The facility, located near the 080 International Lounge at Level 4 of Terminal 2, aims to provide a calming space for travelers who may find airports overwhelming.

BIAL MD & CEO Hari Marar emphasized the airport's commitment to inclusivity, stating, "We are dedicated to offering a passenger-friendly experience through innovations, from our sustainable Terminal 2 to digital solutions enhancing efficiency." Airports, with their bright lights,



crowded spaces, and constant announcements, can be challenging for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), anxiety, PTSD, and other sensory-related conditions. According to BIAL's statement, research suggests that short stays of 15-30 minutes in a sensory-friendly space can significantly reduce stress and improve overall well-being.

Developed in collaboration with In-cluzza of the EnAble India group, the sensory room offers ambient lighting options, including a bubble tube, galaxy projector, and LED cubes. These features provide diverse sensory stimulation, encourage visual tracking, and allow personalized sensory input. EnAble India Chairman & MD Dipesh Sutariya praised the initiative, calling it a progressive step toward accessibility. "This is one of many inclusion efforts by BIAL, and we hope to see similar spaces in airports across the country," he said.

With this initiative, Bengaluru Airport is setting a precedent for accessible travel, ensuring that all passengers, regardless of their needs, have a comfortable journey.



One Killed, 70 Injured as Bus Overturns Near Hanur

TPN Correspondent | Hanur

A tragic accident occurred near Mandalli in Hanur taluk, Chamarajanagar district, where a private bus overturned, resulting in the death of one person and injuries to 70 others.

The incident took place when the bus, carrying passengers returning from an engagement ceremony in Haniyuru village, lost control at a curve near Kothanuru-Mandalli.

The deceased has been identified as Naveen (30), a cleaner from Doddinduvadi village,

who was trapped beneath the bus and died on the spot. Another passenger, Sunil, sustained severe leg injuries. Local residents, along with emergency responders, used an excavator to lift the bus and rescue the victims.

The injured were immediately rushed to Holycross Hospital and the government hospital in Kollegal for treatment. Authorities are investigating the cause of the accident, with initial reports suggesting that the driver lost control of the vehicle at the curve.

Ranya Rao's Firm Allotted Land for Steel Plant During Previous Govt: KIADB

KIADB confirms land allocation to Ranya Rao's firm in January 2023

Investment proposal worth Rs 138 crore approved by BJP government

Congress government clarifies timeline amid political debate

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) has stated that Kannada actor Ranya Rao, recently arrested for gold smuggling, was allotted land for a steel plant by the previous BJP government in January 2023. The land allocation has drawn political attention, prompting the office of Industries Minister M B Patil to release official documents to clarify the timeline.

According to KIADB, 12 acres in the Sira Industrial Area, Tumakuru district, were allotted to Ksiroda India Private Limited, a company linked to Rao, on January 2, 2023. This approval came during the 137th State Level Single Window Clearance Committee (SLSWCC) meeting

under the then-BJP government. The investment proposal, valued at Rs 138 crore, aimed at manufacturing steel TMT bars, rods, and allied products, was expected to generate 160 jobs. The Congress government, which took power in May 2023, released a notification issued on February 22, 2023, confirming the land allotment decision by the previous administration.

The controversy arises as Ranya Rao was arrested for smuggling gold worth Rs 12.56 crore from Dubai at Kempegowda International Airport. Subsequent searches at her residence led to the seizure of gold jewelry worth Rs 2.06 crore and Rs 2.67 crore in cash, bringing the total recovery in the case to Rs 17.29 crore. The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)



continues its investigation into her involvement in an organized gold smuggling network.

Ranya is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Ramachandra Rao, who currently serves as Chairman and Managing Director of the Karnataka State

Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd.

The case has raised questions about political connections and administrative approvals under the previous regime.

Bengaluru, 11 Other Districts to Receive First Pre-Monsoon Showers

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted the first pre-monsoon showers of the year for Bengaluru and 11 other districts in South Interior and Coastal Karnataka this week. The rainfall is expected to be accompanied by lightning and thunder between March 11 and 13.

According to N Puviarasan, Head of the Bengaluru Met Centre, the showers will be caused by convection, a process involving the vertical exchange of heat and moisture in the atmosphere. The affected districts include Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Kolar, Chikaballapura, Tumakuru, Ra-



managara, Mandya, Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Kodagu, Hassan, Dakshina Kannada, and Udupi. However, other parts of the state are expected to remain dry.

Despite the anticipated

rainfall, there will be no major relief from the heat. Bengaluru Urban is likely to record maximum and minimum temperatures of 34°C and 20°C, respectively, on March 11. Coastal districts will continue to expe-

rience hot and humid conditions.

IMD has issued a health advisory, urging vulnerable individuals such as infants, the elderly, and those with chronic illnesses to avoid heat exposure.

People are advised to wear lightweight clothing, stay hydrated, and use head coverings for protection.

Meanwhile, the All India Central Council of Trade Unions has called for reduced working hours for pourakarmikas, citing extreme heat.

They have requested weekly offs, drinking water, ORS, and protective gear like hats and umbrellas to safeguard workers from heat-related illnesses.



Women Making a Difference: Service as Their Motto

TPN Correspondent | Mysuru

While many women excel in prestigious professions, some dedicate themselves to serving society selflessly. R Yashodha and Jayanthi Giridhar, from Mysuru, have been making a meaningful impact through their voluntary services, expecting nothing in return.

Yashodha, 46, has been running a Common Service Centre (CSC) in Mysuru's Gandhi Nagar since 2014, assisting economically weaker sections, especially bedridden and elderly patients. She helps them avail government healthcare benefits, including surgeries under the Rs 5 lakh scheme.

Having worked in menial jobs earlier, she chose this path to make a difference. She frequently visits Jayadeva and KR Hospitals, ensuring that those in need get their entitlements. So far, she has facilitated surgeries for around 400 people.

Recognized for her efforts, she received the First Woman Spotlight in VLE national award in New Delhi in December 2024 and represented Karnataka in a transgender registration program for e-Shram cards in Gujarat.

Similarly, Jayanthi Giridhar, 42, offers free mathematics coaching to students, a subject many struggle with. Originally from Srirangam, Trichy, she holds a BSc in Mathematics. Her journey began when a colleague's daughter needed tutoring. Over the past decade, she has taught over 25 students across State, CBSE, and ICSE syllabi, selecting only those genuinely eager to learn. She believes understanding concepts is key to excelling in math and takes pride in changing students' perspectives on the subject.

For both women, service is not just a choice but a commitment to society.

Bengaluru IT Employees Demand Right to Disconnect, Work-Hour Limits

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka State IT/ITeS Employees' Union (KITU) organized a protest at Freedom Park on Sunday, demanding the right to disconnect from work-related communications after office hours and the enforcement of daily work-hour limits. The union also urged the government to remove the IT sector's exemption from the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act and take strict action against labour law violations.

The protest was held under the slogan, "A healthy work-life balance is every employee's right." KITU members emphasized that countries like Australia, France, and Spain

have already implemented legal protections for employees against after-hours work demands.

"Refusing to respond to work messages after hours can result in being sidelined or assigned extra work," said Rithvik, an IT worker and KITU member. He pointed out that the post-pandemic shift to remote work has led to employers increasingly expecting employees to be available at all times. "This was not as common before the pandemic, but now, work calls at home have become the norm," he added.

Another KITU member, Akash, stressed that while passing a law is important, true change will come only when employees collectively



demand their rights. KITU General Secretary Suhas Adiga condemned the exploitative work culture in the IT sector, calling for urgent reforms.

Protesters held placards with images of Infosys founder Narayana Murthy and Larsen & Toubro MD SN Subrah-

manyan in response to their statements advocating longer work hours. Despite the cause's significance, KITU advisor Vasanthraj expressed disappointment at the turnout, stating that Bengaluru, as a major tech hub, should have seen participation in the thousands.

Bengaluru Metro Fare Hike Forces Commuters to Cheaper Alternatives

- 16% commuters shift to cheaper transport options
- 72.9% spend more on commuting than a one-time meal
- Greenpeace India urges authorities to reconsider fare hike

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A Greenpeace India survey has confirmed that Bengaluru's metro fare hike has pushed many commuters to seek cheaper transport options, increasing road congestion

and air pollution. The survey, conducted across metro stations and marketplaces, found that 16% of respondents had switched to alternative public transport, while 11% reported increased traffic congestion.

The study also highlighted

the financial strain on commuters, with 72.9% stating that they now spend more on commuting than on a single meal. Women, who rely more on public transport, have been particularly affected, with 38.2% reducing non-essential travel. Alarmingly, 5% of respondents said they were considering relocating closer to work or college to cut down

on transport costs. Over 80% of those surveyed termed the fare hike 'unjust' and urged authorities to roll it back. However, 86.7% said they would opt for public transport if it were more affordable and convenient.

Greenpeace India campaigner Aakiz Farooq called for increased investment in mass transit, emphasizing the need for a dedicated public transport



budget. The NGO also suggested the introduction of 'Climate Tickets' to encourage metro usage.

In a letter to Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRC), Greenpeace urged au-

thorities to conduct public consultations before implementing fare hikes. Notably, DH had reported on March 5 that over 90,000 commuters had already abandoned the metro in favor of cheaper alternatives.



City Ravi Calls for Strong Action Against Hampi Assault Accused

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Legislative Council member City Ravi has strongly condemned the recent rape and robbery of a foreign tourist in Hampi, stating that the perpetrators should be dealt with firmly.

Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a globally renowned tourist destination, welcomes hundreds of international visitors daily. Ravi expressed outrage over the heinous crime, emphasizing that such incidents tarnish India's

reputation on the global stage. "The despicable acts of a few criminals send a wrong message about our country. The authorities must act decisively and ensure justice for the victim," Ravi asserted.

He further demanded increased security measures in Hampi to prevent such incidents in the future, calling for stringent action against those responsible. His statement comes amid growing concerns over tourist safety and the impact of the crime on Hampi's tourism industry.

Renowned Art Patron Ka Vem Srinivas Passes Away

TPN Correspondent | Gadag

Kalamonji Venkatagiriappa Srinivas (Kavensree), a celebrated art patron from Gadag, passed away on March 10 while undergoing treatment at a private hospital.

His demise marks an irreparable loss to the world of art and culture.

Srinivas dedicated his life to the promotion of art, establishing the Kala Chetan Sanstha in 1996. For over 25 years, he organized programs that brought international artists to Karnataka, fostering a vibrant artistic community. Recognizing his immense contributions, Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised his work in the 96th edition of Mann Ki Baat in 2023, applauding his relentless efforts in reviving and preserving Karnataka's cultural heritage.

Originally from Kalamonji in Shivamogga district, Srinivas

had been residing in Gadag for 34 years. Besides his contributions to the arts, he also wrote extensively on art and literature in various newspapers. Despite his involvement in the hotel industry, his passion for cultural preservation remained unwavering.

His legacy was celebrated by many, including religious leaders like Tontadarya Jagadguru Dr. Tonta Siddhalinga Mahaswamy of Gadag, who honored him for his lifelong artistic contributions.

His passing is deeply mourned by the artistic and cultural fraternity, marking the end of an era of selfless service to art.

Private Commercial Vehicle Drivers Slams Karnataka Budget & Govt

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Private commercial vehicle drivers and owners have expressed strong dissatisfaction with the Karnataka budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, accusing the government of neglecting their sector.

Representatives from the Indian Vehicle Drivers Trade Union and the Snehajeevi Chalakra Trade Union criticized the budget for failing to address their concerns despite transport being one of the state's largest revenue-generating sectors.

"As part of the drivers' community, we submitted multiple proposals during the pre-budget discussions. However, not a single demand was considered," said Gandasi Sadananda Swami, president of the Indian Vehicle Drivers Trade Union.

Among the key demands were setting up driver rest houses every 100 km on highways, providing ambulance



services, tackling fuel theft from lorries, and increasing police patrols to prevent highway robberies. Additionally, the unions urged the government to establish two more Indira Canteens at Kempegowda International Airport for drivers and declare a dedicated 'Drivers Day.'

They also called for the establishment of driver training centers to reduce accidents and sought uniform vehicle rental rates under the "One City, One Rate" policy. Frustrated by the government's inaction, the unions have warned of a state-wide agitation, including stopping tax payments, to press for their demands.

Ranya Rao Gold Smuggling Case Sparks Political Clash in Karnataka

- BJP alleges Ranya Rao sought help from two ministers
- Congress says investigation details yet to be revealed
- CBI probing the case, political blame game intensifies

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The arrest of actress Ranya Rao in a gold smuggling case has triggered a political confrontation between the BJP and Congress in Karnataka. BJP leaders have alleged that Rao attempted to contact two ministers from the ruling Congress government to escape legal trouble.

Karnataka BJP President B Y Vijayendra and other party leaders have claimed that the case involves high-profile connections. BJP MLA Bharat Shetty stated that the case is

now under the purview of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and raised questions about who might be behind Rao's illegal activities. Vijayendra further alleged that gold worth ₹12 crore was smuggled and suggested that such an operation would not have been possible without the involvement of key figures in the government.

The Congress, however, dismissed the allegations as speculative. Party leaders pointed out that the Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) had allo-



cated land to Rao during the BJP's tenure, implying that any wrongdoing might have its roots in the previous administration.

State Home Minister G Parameshwara countered BJP's accusations, stating that the CBI's investigation is ongoing and no conclusions should be drawn before the findings are

made public. He added that the land allocation issue also needs to be examined in detail.

As both parties continue to trade barbs, the case has become a major political flashpoint. With the CBI handling the investigation, further developments could have significant political implications in Karnataka.

R. Ashok calls the bill a "death sentence" for Bengaluru Greater Bengaluru Bill Sparks Political Uproar



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The proposed Greater Bengaluru Bill has sparked intense opposition, with BJP leaders calling it detrimental to the city's governance. Opposition leader R. Ashok strongly criticized the bill, labeling it a "death sentence" for Bengaluru. Speaking in the Assembly,

Ashok alleged that the bill undermines the 74th Amendment by centralizing power under the Chief Minister, stripping BBMP of its authority. "This is an insult to Bengaluru's legacy. Instead of uniting the city, they are dismantling Kempegowda's vision. Let there be one mayor—divide the commissioner's responsibilities, not

Opposition alleges division of BBMP will increase costs, hinder development

BJP leaders demand Bengaluru remain united under one administration

Bengaluru," he asserted.

Supporting the opposition's stance, BJP MLA Dr. Ashwath Narayan demanded that the proposal to divide BBMP be scrapped. He argued that decentralization of power does not require breaking Bengaluru into multiple parts.

"The Bengaluru Development Minister should not chair the executive committee. Legislative Council and Rajya Sabha members should not have voting rights in this matter," he added.

Meanwhile, BJP MP Basavaraj Bommai, speaking from Delhi, accused the state government of failing in city

management. He highlighted unaddressed issues such as traffic congestion and poor infrastructure, arguing that the government is attempting to mask its inefficiencies by splitting Bengaluru into seven administrative zones. "This will only increase administrative costs and worsen governance," he warned.

Despite opposition protests, Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar and Urban Development Minister Bhairathi Suresh defended the bill, rejecting claims that it weakens local leadership. The debate over Bengaluru's future governance is expected to intensify in the coming days.

Sulibele Stands by Statement on Interfaith Marriages Amid Political Backlash

TPN Correspondent | Mangalore

Prominent orator Chakravarti Sulibele has stood firm on his statement encouraging Hindus to love and marry people of other religions, despite strong opposition from political groups. Speaking to the media in Mangalore, he defended his stance, stating that his remarks were made in response to the ongoing discussions around 'Love Jihad.'

Clarifying his position, Sulibele said, "Love Jihad means love. In response, I said, you too should fall in love and get married." He added that his words

should not be misinterpreted as promoting a counter-movement. "We cannot say that we are doing saffron jihad. There is no such thing as jihad in Hinduism," he stated.

Sulibele's comments have sparked intense debate, with organizations like the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) and the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) strongly opposing his remarks. They have accused him of making inflammatory statements that could lead to communal tensions.

On the other hand, his supporters argue that his state-

ment promotes equality in relationships and is a call for acceptance beyond religious lines. Many have defended his remarks, saying that he was merely suggesting that Hindus should also seek love across faiths, rather than discouraging interfaith relationships.

This is not the first time Sulibele has been at the center of controversy. His speeches have often drawn both support and criticism, with political and re-



ligious groups weighing in on his views.

As the debate continues, it remains to be seen whether further political or legal action will be taken in response to his statement.

Renukacharya Accuses Yatnal of Conspiring Against Yediyurappa, Vijayendra

- Renukacharya alleges Yatnal is plotting against Yediyurappa, Vijayendra
- Claims entire Lingayat community supports Yediyurappa's leadership
- Former minister B C Patil slams Yatnal for attempting to create divisions

TPN Correspondent | Chikkamagaluru

BJP MLA and former minister MP Renukacharya has accused fellow party MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal of deliberately working to tarnish the reputation of former Karnataka Former Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and BJP state president B Y Vijayendra.

Speaking at the Veerashaiva-Lingayat Maha Sangama event in Chikkamagaluru, Renukacharya claimed that Yatnal is unable to accept Yediyurappa and Vijayendra's

growing influence in state politics. He emphasized that Yediyurappa's contributions to the Lingayat community are unparalleled and accused Yatnal of trying to divide the community through his remarks.

"He (Yatnal) will not succeed because Yediyurappa and Vijayendra have the full backing of the Lingayat community," Renukacharya asserted. He further condemned Yatnal for allegedly disrespecting religious leaders by calling them "paid swamijis." Former minister B C Patil also criticized Yatnal, stat-

ing that his remarks were aimed at creating divisions between the Veerashaiva and Lingayat communities. He lamented that the Veerashaiva community was not adequately represented in the state budget presented by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah.

Patil reaffirmed his support for Vijayendra's leadership, stating, "No force can stop Vijayendra from rising to new heights. We, as a united community, will stand behind him. Future elections will be contested under his leadership, and we will bring



the party to power." The convention was attended by seers from various local mutts, Veerashaiva leaders, and members of the Lingayat community, showcasing strong support for the Yediyurappa family.

KIADB Confirms Gold Smuggling Accused Ranya Rao's Land Allotment Under BJP Regime

- KIADB approved 12 acres for steel plant in Tumakuru in early 2023
- Actor arrested for gold smuggling, ₹17.29 crore worth of assets seized
- Investigation ongoing into organized smuggling network

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) has confirmed that Kannada actor Ranya Rao, who was recently arrested for smuggling gold from Dubai, was allotted 12 acres of industrial land by the previous BJP

government in February 2023. The land was granted to Rao's company, Ksiroda India, for setting up a steel plant in the Sira Industrial Area, Tumakuru district.

This announcement came in response to growing media speculation about the land deal following Rao's arrest. To

clarify the situation, the office of M B Patil, the Minister for Medium and Large Industries, shared the official notification issued by the government on February 22, 2023, regarding the land allotment.

The Karnataka government's notification stated that the approval was granted for the establishment of a manufacturing unit by Ksiroda India to produce steel products such as TMT bars and rods. The project, which involves an investment of ₹138 crore, was expected to generate approximately

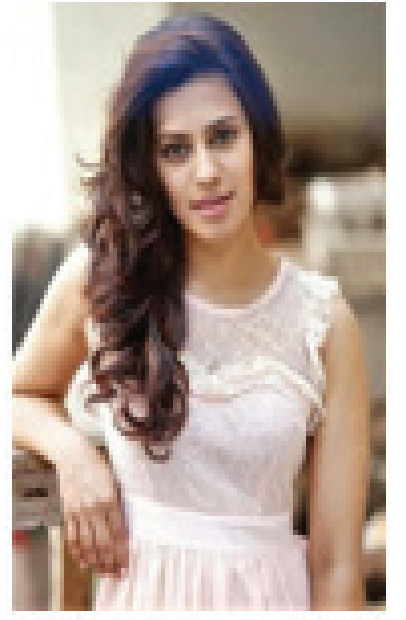
160 jobs.

KIADB CEO Mahesh also confirmed that the land allotment to Rao's company took place on January 2, 2023, during the tenure of the BJP-led government. This was when the 137th State Level Single Window Clearance Committee (SLSWCC) meeting approved the project.

Ranya Rao's company had submitted the proposal in line with the state government's industrial development plans. However, the case took a dramatic turn after Rao's arrest at Kempegowda International

Airport, where gold bars worth ₹12.56 crore were seized from her possession. Following her arrest, further searches at her residence led to the recovery of gold jewellery worth ₹2.06 crore and ₹2.67 crore in Indian currency, as reported by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).

The total seizure in the case amounted to ₹17.29 crore, including assets valued at ₹4.73 crore, highlighting the scale of the gold smuggling operation. Rao, who is the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Ramachandra



Rao, is currently under investigation for her alleged involvement in organized gold smuggling networks.



Air India Express Flags Off 100th Aircraft with Chittara Art from KIA Bengaluru

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Air India Express marked a significant milestone on March 10, 2025, with the induction of its 100th aircraft, a Boeing 737-8, which showcases Karnataka's traditional 'Chittara' art on its tail. This aircraft is part of the airline's 'Tales of India' tail art theme, which highlights the country's rich and diverse artistic heritage through unique designs.

The tail art features several traditional art forms and indigenous textile motifs, including Ajrakh, Bandhani, Banarasi, Ikat, Jaapi, Jamdani, Kalamkari, Kanjeevaram, Kolam, and Warli. The 100th aircraft, however, stands out with Chittara art, an intricate folk art traditionally practiced by the Deewaru community of Karnataka. Chittara, painted using natural colors on mud-coated surfaces, symbolizes prosperity and celebration, reflecting a deep connection to nature and culture.

The milestone aircraft was officially flagged off by Alope Singh, Managing Director of Air India Express, at Kempe-

gowda International Airport in Bengaluru, the airline's largest hub. This aircraft will serve the Bengaluru-Hindon route as part of the airline's expanding network.

Singh expressed pride in the company's rapid growth, highlighting how Air India Express, in just over three years since joining the Tata group in January 2022, has successfully integrated and expanded its fleet. The airline has nearly doubled its fleet from 54 aircraft to 100, enhancing its presence in India, especially in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, which are emerging as key economic hotspots.

Air India Express has also made significant strides in expanding its network both domestically and internationally. New routes added include Dibrugarh, Dimapur, Hindon, Jammu, Patna, and Port Blair, along with international destinations such as Bangkok and Phuket.

With a modern, fuel-efficient fleet and a focus on expanding connectivity, Air India Express is playing a crucial role in the next phase of India's aviation growth.

IMD Issues Heavy Rain Warning for Tamil Nadu, Forecasts Wet Spell Until March 13

TPN Correspondent | Tamil Nadu

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a warning for heavy rainfall in parts of Tamil Nadu, with the wet conditions expected to persist until March 13. On Tuesday, areas in the southern districts of Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, and Thoothukudi are likely to experience heavy rainfall, as per the latest forecast.

According to the IMD, scattered to fairly widespread light to moderate rainfall, accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning, is expected across Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Karaikal on March 10-11. Additionally, similar weather conditions are forecast for Lakshadweep from March 11-12. Isolated to scattered light to moderate rainfall with thunderstorms and lightning is



also likely in Kerala & Mahe, as well as coastal and South Interior Karnataka, between March 11-13. The Andaman & Nicobar Islands are expected to witness scattered to fairly widespread light to moderate rainfall throughout the next seven days. March 10: Coastal

Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Karaikal are expected to experience light to moderate rainfall at a few places, while the interior regions of Tamil Nadu may witness isolated showers with thunderstorms and lightning.

March 11: Widespread light to moderate rainfall is antic-

ipated, with thunderstorms and lightning in some areas. Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely at isolated locations in Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, and Thoothukudi districts. Other districts, including Virudhunagar, Sivaganga, Mayiladuthurai, Thanjavur, Tiruvallur, Nagapattinam, Pudukkottai, Ramanathapuram, and Karaikal, may also experience heavy rainfall.

March 12: Light to moderate rainfall with thunderstorms and lightning is expected in isolated locations, continuing the wet conditions across the state.

The IMD has advised residents in these areas to remain alert, especially in districts forecasted to receive heavy rainfall, as localized flooding and disruption to daily life could occur.

Manipur Protest Triggers Indefinite Shutdown After Protestor's Death

TPN Correspondent | Manipur

A protestor's death on Saturday has led to an indefinite total shutdown in Kuki-dominated areas of Manipur, severely disrupting life in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi districts. The protests erupted in response to a government directive allowing unrestricted movement along the state's highways, which many in the Kuki community oppose.

Lalgouthang Singit, a 30-year-old protestor, was killed by gunfire during demonstrations in Kangpokpi district. Security forces had attempted to disperse protestors who were blocking a state transport bus, leading to the fa-

tal confrontation.

The protests were sparked by Union Home Minister Amit Shah's March 1 order that allowed free travel on highways in Manipur starting March 8. The decision is part of the government's efforts to restore normalcy in a state that has been grappling with ethnic tensions for nearly two years. Manipur is divided into two zones: the Kuki-dominated hills and the Meitei-dominated valley, with each community unable to enter the other's territory due to ongoing conflict.

In the wake of Singit's death, the Kuki-Zo Council, supported by several other Kuki organizations, announced an indefinite shutdown in the

Kuki-dominated areas, beginning at midnight. Protestors blocked key highways, including the Imphal-Dimapur road and the Tiddim Road, which connects Imphal to Mizoram. They used burnt tires and wooden logs to obstruct traffic, further escalating the situation.

The shutdown has crippled normal life in the affected districts, with markets, schools, and businesses closed. Security forces have been deployed to maintain order, but tensions remain high as both sides continue to demand greater



control and influence over the state's governance.

The situation in Manipur remains tense, with authorities seeking to balance the demands of both the Kuki and Meitei communities, while ensuring public safety and res-

Hampi Tourism Hit by Koppal Incident; Homestay Bookings Canceled

TPN Correspondent | Vijayanagara

Tourism in Hampi has seen a sharp decline following the brutal rape and murder incident in Sanapur village, Koppal district. The crime, which involved an Israeli victim, has drawn international attention, prompting multiple embassies to reach out to the Chief Minister's office and local authorities for updates on their citizens' safety.

Homestays and hotels catering to foreign tourists, particularly Israelis, have been severely affected. In the past two days, over 25 homestays in and around Hampi have reported booking cancellations through travel agencies. The decline is not limited to foreign visitors—many domestic tourists are also either canceling or postponing their trips.

Virupakshi V Hampi, secretary of the State Tourist Guides Association, expressed concern over the impact on tourism and urged authorities to intensify security measures. "The



entire nation has condemned the Sanapur incident. We hope the police increase patrolling in Hampi and its surroundings," he said.

In response, Vijayanagara Superintendent of Police, Shrihari Babu B L, held a meeting with homestay owners and assured that safety measures will be strengthened. "This incident is a wake-up call for both homestay owners and the police. We will soon issue guidelines to ensure better security for visitors," he stated.

With the tourism-dependent economy of Hampi under threat, authorities are working to restore confidence among travelers and ensure their safety in the region.

Punjab Police Arrest International Drug Trafficker Wanted by FBI

TPN Correspondent | Punjab

In a significant breakthrough, the Punjab Police have arrested Shehnaz Singh, also known as Shawn Bhinder, a major international drug trafficker who was on the FBI's most-wanted list. Singh, a key figure in a global narcotics syndicate, is accused of smuggling large quantities of cocaine from Colombia into the United States and Canada.

The arrest was made by the Tarn Taran Police, with Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav confirming the news on social media. Yadav described Singh as a "Big Fish" and praised the Tarn Taran Police for their role in capturing this notorious transnational

drug lord. Singh had been on the run after his associates were apprehended in the U.S. in late February, leading to significant drug seizures.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Singh and his co-conspirators had been operating a drug trafficking operation since October 2023. They were involved in importing cocaine from Colombia, which was then distributed in major U.S. cities and Canada. The operation also included a violent internal dispute, with Singh and his associates stealing cocaine from other members of the syndicate and engaging in armed confrontations.

Following a major crackdown by U.S. authorities in February, which resulted in the



seizure of 391 kg of methamphetamine, 109 kg of cocaine, and firearms, Singh fled to India. He was eventually tracked down by the Punjab Police and arrested.

Singh's arrest is part of the Punjab government's ongoing "Yudh Nashian Virudh" (War

Against Drugs) campaign, which was launched on February 25. The state government, under Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, is intensifying efforts to combat the drug crisis in Punjab, with a goal of making the state drug-free within three months.



Regulating Speech

Balancing Accountability and Free Expression

The Point Desk

The debate over free speech and state intervention has intensified in India, particularly in the digital space. The recent controversy involving Ranveer Allahbadia and Samay Raina highlights the complex relationship between public outrage, legal interpretation, and regulatory oversight. While offensive remarks deserve criticism, the question remains—should they be treated as crimes?

The State's Response: Crime or Control?

Governments across the world often respond to legal ambiguities with overreach rather than measured regulation. Instead of clarifying existing laws, they resort to preemptive action, ensuring that potential disorder is controlled before it manifests. This tendency stems from a fundamental fear—not of crime itself, but of losing authority over unpredictable situations.

This pattern is evident in how authorities reacted to the Allahbadia-Raina episode. Multiple FIRs were lodged in different states under laws related to obscenity, prompting Allahbadia to seek legal relief. The Supreme Court granted him interim protection but imposed strict conditions, including the surrender of his passport. While the court's intervention prevented excessive legal harassment, its remarks during the hearing reflected a moralistic stance rather than a neutral legal evaluation.

Judiciary's Role: Upholding Law or Enforcing Morality?

The Supreme Court's sharp criticism of Allahbadia's statements extended beyond legal scrutiny, veering into subjective condemnation. Terms like "perverted mind" and "societal shame" framed the issue in moral



rather than constitutional terms. This raises concerns about the judiciary's role—should it adjudicate based on clear legal principles or enforce societal norms through personal interpretations? Indian free speech jurisprudence has long emphasized that restrictions must align with Article 19(2) of the Constitution, which permits limitations only on specific grounds like public order, defamation, and incitement to violence. If speech does not clearly violate these principles, treating it as a criminal offense risks creating a precedent where subjective morality dictates legal outcomes.

Regulating Digital Content: The Need for a Balanced Approach

The controversy has reignited discussions on digital content regulations, with lawmakers calling for stricter controls on online speech. However, heavy-handed regulation risks stifling creativity, innovation, and open discourse. Instead, a structured yet flexible approach can ensure accountability without suppressing expression.

1. Platform Responsibility Without Excessive Criminalization

Social media platforms should en-

force content policies aligned with Indian laws but retain some intermediary protections if they adhere to best practices. A system of graded accountability—where platforms are incentivized to self-regulate rather than penalized excessively—can be more effective.

2. Transparent and Reviewable Content Moderation

Platforms should establish clear, predictable takedown policies with user appeal mechanisms. Instead of arbitrary removals, an independent review process can prevent unfair censorship.

3. A Non-Intrusive Regulatory Body

A neutral industry-led body, similar to Ofcom in the UK, can oversee digital content moderation without direct government intervention. Its role should focus on guidance, compliance monitoring, and dispute resolution rather than enforcement. Regulating digital speech requires a nuanced approach—one that ensures accountability without enabling state overreach. A framework based on transparency, platform responsibility, and measured intervention will help strike the right balance between free expression and social accountability.

Empowering Women Legislatively Is A Must

March 8th, International Women's Day, is a strong reminder of the need to support women's rights and empowerment in our society. Under the leadership of Mr. Revanth Reddy, the Telangana Government has launched several schemes to uplift women. Adding to these efforts, the recent passage of the Women's Reservation Bill 2023, is a significant step forward for gender equality in India.

The bill, approved by both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, reserves one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the Delhi Assembly for women. It also includes seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). This important legislation aims to increase women's representation in politics, giving them a bigger role in shaping the nation's future. The Women's Reservation Bill 2023, also known as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, has been passed by both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, marking a historic step towards gender equality in India. The bill, which is the 128th Constitutional Amendment, reserves one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the Delhi Assembly for women. It also applies to seats reserved for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), promising a significant boost to women's representation in Indian politics.

Currently, women make up only 15.2% of the Lok Sabha and 13% of the Rajya Sabha. While this is an improvement from the 5% representation in the first Lok Sabha, it is still lower than many other countries. According to the United Nations, Rwanda (61%), Cuba (53%), and Nicaragua (52%) lead in women's representation.



Sagar Vanaparthi,
Sr Journalist &
Political Analyst.

Even Bangladesh (21%) and Pakistan (20%) have better female representation in their parliaments compared to India.

The new bill introduces key changes by inserting Article 330A into the Constitution, reserving one-third of Lok Sabha seats for women, including those reserved for SCs and STs. It also adds Article 332A to ensure similar reservations in state legislative assemblies and amends Article 239AA to extend these provisions to the Delhi Assembly. The reservation will be in effect for 15 years, with the option to extend it based on a law made by Parliament. Reserved seats will rotate after each delimitation exercise.

However, there are some challenges. The reservation will only start after a fresh delimitation based on the next census, leaving uncertainty about when women will begin to benefit. Moreover, the bill does not provide reservations in the Rajya Sabha and State Legislative Councils, where women's representation is still low.

For the bill to make a real impact, the government must ensure that the census and delimitation process is completed on time. Extending reservations to the Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils could also help achieve balanced representation across all legislative bodies.

On International Women's Day, this bill brings hope for a brighter future where women have a stronger voice in governance. It is not just about increasing numbers but enhancing the quality of democracy by bringing diverse voices to the forefront. As a society, everyone must contribute to empowering women not only through laws but also by creating an environment where women can thrive and lead.



India's Champions Trophy Triumph Exposes Pakistan's Decline

The Point Desk

As India lifted their third ICC Champions Trophy, a glaring absence loomed over the celebration—Pakistan, the official hosts, were nowhere to be seen. Beyond their logo on television screens, there was no Pakistani representation at the trophy ceremony. The stage was dominated by Indian officials, with ICC President Jay Shah leading the proceedings. The absence of any Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) official, including Chairman Mohsin Naqvi, was both baffling and telling. Despite being the official hosts, Pakistan failed to make their presence felt, either on the field or off it.

A Host in Name Only

Pakistan's hosting rights for the tournament were already a compromised affair, with all matches played in the UAE instead of their home soil. Yet, the total absence of PCB representatives at the final added to the embarrassment. An ICC spokesperson clarified that no PCB official was present in Dubai for the match. Naqvi, who also serves as Pakistan's Interior Minister, cited pressing commitments at home, but surely, a high-profile event like this warranted at least some representation? Hosting an ICC event after nearly three decades should have been a moment of pride, but Pakistan failed to seize the moment, further accentuating the widening gap between them and India.

The Diverging Cricketing Fortunes of India and Pakistan

India's journey to the title was one of absolute dominance—five wins in five matches, a flawless campaign that reflected their standing as the best limited-overs side in world cricket. In contrast, Pakistan's campaign was dismal, crashing out without a single victory. Once considered fierce competitors, the Pakistani team now struggles to keep pace with India, both in terms of skill and consistency.

The gulf between the two teams is not just about this tournament; it reflects the larger trajectories of the two nations. While India has evolved into a global powerhouse—both in cricket and beyond—Pakistan continues to grapple with internal turmoil, financial instability, and administrative chaos. The PCB reportedly spent PKR 12.8 billion on stadium renovations, yet the tournament saw underwhelming attendance figures, highlighting deeper structural issues within Pakistan's cricketing ecosystem.

India's Supreme Command of the Rivalry

Historically, Pakistan held the upper hand in ODI encounters, particularly in the '80s and '90s. However, the balance has tilted significantly in India's favor in recent years. The last bilateral ODI series between the two teams was in 2012-13, with India winning 2-1. Since 2010, India has claimed victory in 13 of the 17 ODIs against Pakistan, including a dominant six-wicket win in this very tournament. Legendary Indian cricketer Sunil Gavaskar even stated that Pakistan would struggle against India's second-string team—an assertion that no longer seems far-fetched.

Shahid Afridi, a former Pakistan all-rounder, summed it up aptly: "India has more match-winners. A match-winner is someone who knows how to win a game single-handedly. Right now, we don't have such players." This candid admission speaks volumes about Pakistan's cricketing struggles.

India's Imperious Run in ICC Tournaments

India's performance in the last three ICC white-ball tournaments has been nothing short of extraordinary—23 wins in 24 completed matches, with the sole defeat coming in the 2023 ODI World Cup final. Their Champions Trophy campaign was a textbook demonstration of control, with even their closest contest—the final—ending with an over to spare.

Gautam Gambhir, in his first major tournament as India's head coach, can take a sigh of relief, as this win silences critics questioning India's ability to finish ICC events on a high. Tactically, India was spot-on, including the bold decision to field five spinners, which paid rich dividends. Ravindra Jadeja's winning runs were a poetic conclusion, given his immense contributions over the years.

Pakistan's Search for Direction

As India basks in the glory of another ICC triumph, Pakistan is once again in a state of flux. In the wake of their Champions Trophy disaster, the PCB made sweeping changes, removing Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan from the T20I squad. A new captain has been appointed, but whether these changes will bring stability remains uncertain.

For now, the contrast between India and Pakistan in cricket is stark. Once a fierce rivalry, the contest has turned lopsided, with India miles ahead. The arch-rivalry remains a major attraction in global cricket, but its competitive edge is diminishing. Until Pakistan finds a way to address its structural deficiencies, the chasm between the two sides will only widen.

India, much like the dominant Australian teams of the past, has set a benchmark that others, including Pakistan, can only aspire to reach.

Visit to Mauritius, a key partner in Indian Ocean, will open new chapter: Modi

- **Modi to Visit Mauritius to Strengthen Ties and Celebrate National Day**
- **Visit highlights India's strategic engagement in the Indian Ocean region**
- **PM Modi to inaugurate India-funded civil service college and health centre**

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to embark on a two-day state visit to Mauritius on March 11, 2025, to attend the island nation's 57th National Day celebrations as the chief guest. During his visit, India and Mauritius are expected to sign several agreements aimed at enhancing economic, security, and cultural cooperation between the two countries.

PM Modi's visit comes at a time of deepening bilateral ties, with India and Mauritius having a strong partnership, especially in the areas of maritime security, trade, and development. The visit will be marked by significant events, including the participation of an Indian armed forces contingent, the Indian Navy warship, and the Akash Ganga skydiving team in the National Day celebrations.

Mauritian Prime Minister Navinchandra Ramgoolam welcomed PM Modi's visit, highlighting it as a testament to the close relations between the two nations. He expressed gratitude for Modi's presence despite his packed international schedule.

Key agreements to be signed include an MoU on maritime cooperation, enhancing white shipping information exchange to improve maritime security. Additionally, both nations will sign agreements in areas such as capac-



ity building, financial crime prevention, and promoting small and medium enterprises. India's Enforcement Directorate and Mauritius' Financial Crime Commission will also collaborate on combating money laundering.

During his visit, PM Modi and PM Ramgoolam will inaugurate a civil service college and a health centre built with Indian grants. Modi is also expected to meet with political leaders, dignitaries, and members of the Indian-origin community in Mauritius.

Mauritius, home to a large Indian-origin pop-

ulation, shares strong historical and cultural ties with India. The trade between the two countries has grown significantly, with India being one of Mauritius' largest trading partners. Both nations continue to work closely on issues of maritime security, with India aiding in the development of strategic infrastructure on Agalega Island.

PM Modi's visit to Mauritius underscores India's commitment to strengthening ties in the Indian Ocean region, balancing relations with Mauritius and its economic cooperation with China.



Maharashtra budget: 3rd airport in Mumbai, night landing in Shirdi

TPN Correspondent | Maharashtra

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Ajit Pawar presented the state budget for the financial year 2025-26 in the state assembly on Monday, unveiling several ambitious proposals aimed at boosting the state's infrastructure and economic growth.

A significant proposal in the budget is the plan for a third airport in Mumbai, which is expected to be operational by 2030. This new airport will be located near Vadhvan Port, strategically positioned with the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train station nearby. Additionally, domestic flights are set to commence at Navi Mumbai International Airport next month, with 85% of the construction already completed and successful trial runs carried out.

Pawar also announced the introduction of a night landing facility at Shirdi Airport, a major pilgrimage destination, which will enhance connectivity for travelers visiting the region.

In terms of infrastructure development, Maharashtra plans to invest in expanding its road network, with the construction of 1,500 kilometers of new roads and the upgrading of 7,000 kilometers of existing roads to cemented roads. These initiatives are aimed at improving transportation across the state and boosting economic activity.

The state's economy is projected to see substantial growth, with Mumbai's economy expected to grow from \$140 billion to \$300 billion. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) is being developed as a major growth hub, and Pawar outlined the vision for MMR to have a USD 1.5 trillion economy by 2047.

Additionally, the state aims to generate 50 lakh new employment opportunities over the next five years. This will be supported by Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth ₹15.72 lakh crore, signed with 56 companies at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Pawar also announced the upcoming metro service linking Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport with Navi Mumbai International Airport, enhancing connectivity between these key transport hubs. These budget proposals reflect Maharashtra's focus on long-term economic growth, infrastructure development, and improved connectivity.

Grape expectations: Italy sniffs wine opportunity in India

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Italy is strategically focusing on the growing Indian market for its premium wines, with Vinitaly, the country's flagship wine roadshow, making its debut in New Delhi over the weekend. The event brought together a variety of exhibitors from Italy's top wine-producing regions, including Apulia, Tuscany, Veneto, Campania, and Abruzzo, aiming to establish business opportunities and forge collaborations with local distributors and wine enthusiasts.

The Italian wine industry sees immense potential in India, a market



that is rapidly growing in terms of demand for luxury and niche products. Despite the ongoing negotiations for an India-European Union (EU) Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which have seen wine tariffs emerge as a key sticking point, Italy remains committed to expanding its footprint in the Indian wine market. Vinitaly served as a

platform for showcasing Italy's renowned wines, which range from prestigious reds to unique white varieties, appealing to India's growing segment of affluent consumers and connoisseurs.

Italy's wine industry is betting big on India as a new hub for premium wines, with the event aimed

at educating the Indian market on the distinct characteristics of Italian wines. Participants were given an opportunity to explore the diversity of Italian wines through tastings and discussions, with a special focus on the craftsmanship behind Italy's wine-making heritage. The event also highlighted the significance of the FTA discussions, where wine tariffs remain a crucial issue for both India and the EU. The Italian government hopes to reduce these tariffs, making Italian wines more accessible and appealing to Indian consumers, ultimately boosting exports and strengthening bilateral trade relations.

Mumbai To Have \$1.5 Trillion Economy By 2047: Ajit Pawar



TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

In the state budget for 2025-26, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar outlined ambitious plans aimed at significantly boosting the state's economy. Aimed at increasing Mumbai's economic value from USD 140 billion to USD 1.5 trillion by 2047, the state government has proposed the development of at least seven international-standard business centres across the city.

Pawar announced that business hubs will be established in strategic locations including Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC), Kurla-Worli, Wadala, Goregaon, Navi Mumbai, Kharghar, and Virar-Bhoisar. These centres are set to transform the Mumbai Metropolitan Region into a thriving economic hub.

Another major announcement was the development of Vadhavan port, in which the state government holds a 26% share. This massive project, valued at Rs 76,220 crore, will have an annual cargo handling capacity of 300 million metric tonnes—three times the capacity of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT). Expected to start cargo operations by 2030, Vadhavan

port will be connected to the Mumbai-Nagpur Samruddhi Expressway and a third Mumbai airport, in addition to the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train station.

Maharashtra is also working on enhancing its transportation network. Pawar revealed that a metro project connecting Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport to the Navi Mumbai International Airport is set to begin soon. Additionally, the newly developed Navi Mumbai airport, with 85% of its construction complete, will be ready to handle domestic flights by April and is expected to cater to 90 million passengers annually.

The state has also earmarked significant resources for expanding its metro network, with 64.4 km of metro lines planned for inauguration in Mumbai and Pune next year. Over the next five years, a total of 237.5 km of metro lines will be operational, further boosting connectivity.

The upgrades to Nagpur's Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport and the development of new airports in Amravati and Gadchiroli will further stimulate regional growth, particularly in Vidarbha.

India Imposes Anti-Dumping Duty on Chemical Imports from China and Japan



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

India has imposed an anti-dumping duty of up to \$986 per tonne for five years on "Trichloroisocyanuric acid," a chemical used for water treatment, imported from China and Japan. The decision, announced through a Finance Ministry notification, aims to protect the domestic industry from the negative impact of cheap imports flooding the market.

The move follows recommendations from the Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR), an investigative arm of the Commerce Ministry, which conducted a probe into the alleged dumping of the chemical by both countries. The DGTR concluded that the domestic industry had suffered material injury due to these below-cost imports, leading to the imposition of the duty.

According to the notification, the anti-dumping duty will be enforced for a period of five years, unless revoked or amended earlier. The two countries—China and Japan—are among India's

key trading partners, and the decision is expected to have a significant impact on trade relations.

The DGTR is responsible for investigating claims of dumping, while the Finance Ministry ultimately decides whether to impose the recommended duties. In this case, the duty was imposed within three months of the DGTR's recommendations.

Anti-dumping duties are typically levied when a country believes its domestic industries are being harmed by imports that are being sold at unfairly low prices. This practice, known as dumping, is seen as a threat to local businesses that cannot compete with cheaper goods, potentially leading to financial losses or even closures. India's decision aligns with global trade practices under the World Trade Organization (WTO) framework, which allows countries to impose such duties to ensure fair competition and provide a level playing field for domestic industries. Importantly, anti-dumping measures are not intended to restrict trade or arbitrarily increase costs but to counteract unfair trade practices.

"Don't Think Zelensky Is Grateful": Trump Jibe Follows Elon Musk's Warning

- Claims Biden administration made it too easy for Ukraine to receive funding
- Asserts Russia would not have invaded Ukraine if he were president
- Defends his tough stance on Russia and sanctions during his presidency

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Former US President Donald Trump has once again criticized Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, accusing him of lacking gratitude for the billions of dollars in aid the United States provided to Ukraine under the Biden administration. In a recent interview with Fox News, Trump compared the US's \$350 billion aid to Ukraine to "taking candy from a baby," suggesting that it was too easy for Zelensky to accept such a substantial amount of support.

The remarks came after a series of tensions between the US and Ukraine, particularly following a contentious meeting in the Oval Office on February 28, where President Biden halted military funding to Ukraine. Zelensky later issued an apology for



the diplomatic fallout. Speaking to Maria Bartiromo on Sunday Morning Futures, Trump reiterated his frustration, stating that Zelensky's behavior was not reflective of the significant aid received by Ukraine since Russia's invasion in 2022.

Trump acknowledged Zelensky's intelligence and toughness but maintained that the Ukrainian leader's attitude towards US aid was one of entitlement. "He took money out of this country under Biden like taking candy from a baby. It was so easy with that same attitude," Trump re-

marked.

Trump also defended his own record on Russia, asserting that no one had been tougher on Moscow than him, citing his sanctions on Russia and the halt of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline during his presidency. He claimed that if he had been president in 2022, Russia would not have invaded Ukraine, and other global conflicts, such as Hamas' attack on Israel in October 2023, would not have occurred.

In response to questions about the US-Ukraine mineral deal, Trump said he believed it would still proceed. His interview follows a warning from Elon Musk, who suggested that Ukraine's defense system could collapse if he were to shut off his Starlink satellite services, which have been crucial for military communications.



New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon to visit India

TPN Correspondent | Auckland

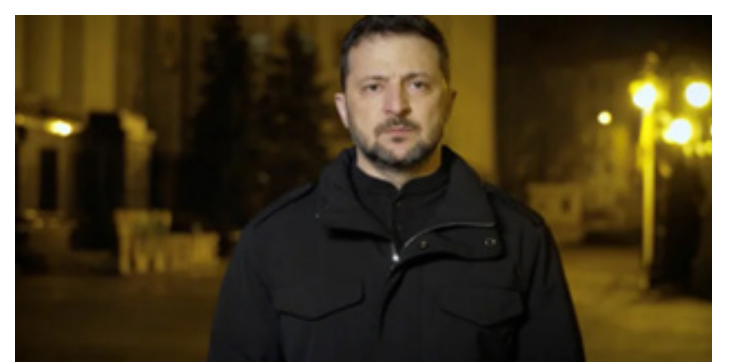
Tech billionaire Elon Musk has once again sparked global debate over the ongoing war in Ukraine with a series of provocative tweets. Musk, the CEO of SpaceX, claimed that his Starlink system plays a critical role in supporting Ukraine's military operations, suggesting that the entire front line of Ukrainian forces could collapse if he chose to deactivate the service. His comments have raised concerns and reignited discussions about the role of private companies in conflicts.

In one tweet, Musk boldly stated, "I literally challenged Putin to one-on-one physical combat over Ukraine, and my Starlink system is the backbone of the Ukrainian army." He further claimed that the Ukrainian military's communications and operations would be severely disrupted without Starlink, a satellite internet system developed by SpaceX, which has been crucial in maintaining connectivity in Ukraine amid Russian attacks on the country's infrastructure.

Musk's comments have been met with mixed reactions, with some criticizing him for overly inflating the importance of Starlink in Ukraine's military strategy. Others have expressed concern about the potential for Musk's actions to influence the outcome of the war. Musk, who has previously made headlines for his controversial views on the conflict, also suggested that imposing sanctions on Ukrainian oligarchs could help bring an end to the war. His remarks have added fuel to the ongoing debate over how private businesses and individuals should engage with international conflicts.

The billionaire's influence, particularly through his company SpaceX, has made him a central figure in discussions about the role of private companies in modern warfare. While Starlink has undoubtedly provided critical communication infrastructure for Ukraine, Musk's public statements have raised questions about the broader ethical and political implications of his involvement.

As the war in Ukraine continues to evolve, Musk's influence on global geopolitics remains a topic of increasing scrutiny. His comments further highlight the complex intersection of technology, business, and international conflict.



Ukraine Set For Crucial Talks With US On Ending War With Russia

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is set to arrive in Saudi Arabia on Monday ahead of high-stakes talks aimed at resolving the ongoing conflict with Russia. The talks, scheduled for Tuesday in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, will bring together US and Ukrainian officials for the first time since Zelensky's tense White House visit last month.

Zelensky confirmed he would meet with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Monday and then participate in discussions with the American team the following day. US Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff has emphasized that Washington hopes to establish a framework for a peace agreement and an initial ceasefire.

While Zelensky expressed Ukraine's commitment to constructive dialogue, he made it clear that Ukraine's interests must be prioritized. "We hope for results, both in terms of bringing peace closer and continuing support," Zelensky stated in his evening address.

The Ukrainian delegation will include key figures such as Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga, Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, Chief of Staff Andriy Yermak, and military commander Pavlo Palisa. Zelensky mentioned Ukraine is in "constant contact" with the US team ahead of the talks.

Trudeau's Successor, Mark Carney, Signals Big Diplomatic Shift In India-Canada Ties

Mark Carney Plans to Rebuild Strained Ties Between Canada and India

TPN Correspondent | Ottawa

Mark Carney, the newly elected leader of Canada's ruling Liberal Party and future Prime Minister, has expressed his intention to "rebuild" the strained relationship between Canada and India. Under Carney's leadership, Canada aims to diversify its trade relations with New Delhi, which suffered under the leadership of his predecessor, Justin Trudeau.

Carney secured a decisive victory in the Liberal Party leadership race, receiving 85.9 percent of the votes. In his first statements as leader, he addressed the challenges Canada faces due to US tariffs and indicated that diversifying trade with like-minded countries, including India, would be a priority for his government. "There needs to be a shared sense of values around that commer-



cial relationship, and if I am Prime Minister, I look forward to the opportunity to build that," Carney said.

Carney's knowledge of economic ties between Canada and India gives him an edge. Having previously served as the Governor of both the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England, and as the head

of Brookfield Asset Management, Carney is familiar with the significant investments Canada has made in India, particularly in real estate, renewable energy, and infrastructure. He stepped down from his position at Brookfield in January 2025.

India, particularly, may welcome Ottawa's efforts to improve

bilateral ties, especially given the ongoing tariff issues with the US. Carney's efforts could provide an opportunity for India to raise concerns regarding Canada's immigration restrictions and tightened visa norms, particularly as Canada remains one of the top destinations for Indian migrants. The relationship between India and Canada hit a low point in September 2023, when Trudeau accused India of involvement in the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar. India strongly rejected these allegations, calling them "baseless." In the aftermath, both countries expelled each other's top diplomats, and Ottawa paused the Early Progress Trade Agreement, which was supposed to be concluded in 2023. Carney's leadership offers a potential path forward to restore and strengthen ties.

Won't Negotiate Under "Intimidation": Iran Rejects US Talks Amid Tensions

TPN Correspondent | Tehran, Iran

Iran has firmly stated it will not negotiate under "pressure" or "intimidation," following US President Donald Trump's decision to end a sanctions waiver that allowed Iraq to purchase electricity from Iran. The waiver's termination is part of Trump's renewed "maximum pressure" campaign aimed at crippling Iran's economy, particularly its oil industry.

Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, took to social media to reject any talks driven by external pressure, asserting that Tehran's nuclear program is purely peaceful. He stated, "We will NOT negotiate under pressure and intimidation. We will NOT even consider it, no matter what the subject may be."

Despite a previous statement



from Iran's mission to the United Nations suggesting potential openness to discuss US concerns over the "potential militarization" of Iran's nuclear program, Araghchi emphasized that such discussions were off the table unless they focused solely on Iran's peaceful intentions. Tehran made it clear that any talks aiming to dismantle Iran's nuclear program—an objective they say former President Obama failed to achieve—would be cat-

egorically rejected.

The US decision to end Iraq's sanctions waiver, which had been in place since 2018, is aimed at depriving Iran of economic relief, specifically in energy revenues. Iran supplies a significant portion of Iraq's gas and electricity, contributing to the Iranian economy. The US Embassy in Baghdad urged Iraq to reduce its reliance on Iranian energy imports, with the State Department

reiterating that the sanctions pressure is meant to curb Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs, as well as its support for terrorist groups.

The sanctions waiver for Iraq was introduced as part of a deal negotiated during Obama's administration, which lifted sanctions on Iran in exchange for limiting its nuclear program. Since Trump's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran has gradually scaled back its commitments, leading US officials to estimate that Iran could produce a nuclear weapon in just a few weeks if it chose to.

The ending of the energy waiver is expected to exacerbate Iraq's power shortages, especially during the upcoming summer months, with experts predicting challenges in maintaining electricity supplies.

GST Tax Evasion Detection Hits ₹1.95 Lakh Crore in 25,397 Cases

Central GST officers have detected tax evasion of ₹1.95 lakh crore in 25,397 cases during the April-January period of the current fiscal year, according to data shared in Parliament on Monday. The total number of GST evasion cases detected by central officers over the past five years has reached 86,711, with the total amount of tax evaded surpassing ₹6.79 lakh crore.

In the current fiscal year up to January 2025, the total number of evasion cases detected stands at 25,397, with the total detection amount of ₹1,94,938 crore. During this period, a voluntary deposit of ₹21,520 crore was made in relation to tax evasion cases.

Additionally, there were 13,018 cases of Input Tax Credit (ITC) frauds detected in the current fiscal year, involving a total of ₹46,472 crore. As part of the investigation, a voluntary deposit of ₹2,211 crore was made to settle the fraud cases.

The GST Investigation Wing's data for the 2023-24 fiscal year revealed that 20,582 evasion cases were detected, amounting to ₹2.30 lakh crore in evaded taxes. These figures highlight the government's ongoing efforts to combat GST tax evasion and enhance compliance across the country.

The government's crackdown on tax evasion continues to focus on large-scale frauds and has led to significant voluntary deposits, indicating an increased willingness among businesses to settle tax issues proactively. The focus on ITC fraud cases also underscores the need for stricter monitoring of input tax claims to prevent fraudulent practices.

Overall, the detection of such a large number of GST evasion cases reflects the government's commitment to tackling financial irregularities, ensuring greater transparency, and securing vital revenue for the economy.



India's Thermal Coal Imports Drop for Sixth Consecutive Month

India's imports of thermal coal, primarily used for power generation, continued their downward trend in February, marking the sixth consecutive month of decline. According to ship tracking data, the drop in imports is attributed to slower growth in coal-fired power generation, which has been impacted by a slowdown in manufacturing activity. This marks the longest such streak since February 2022, when imports had declined for eight straight months.

India, the world's second-largest importer of coal, saw its thermal coal imports decrease by 15.3% to 12.16 million metric tons in February. This follows a broader trend, as the country's total thermal coal imports fell by 20% to 77.3 million metric tons in the six months leading up to February 28.

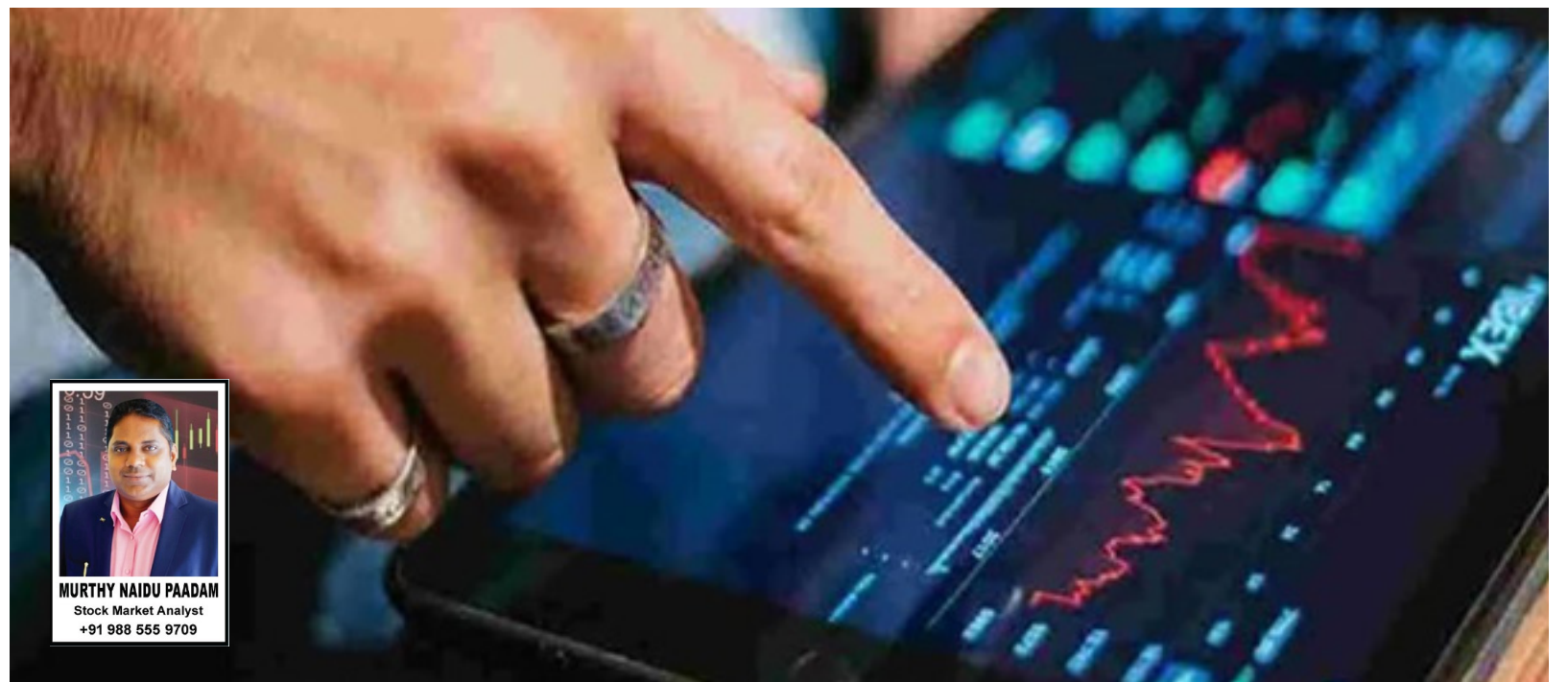
The slowdown in manufacturing activity in India has played a significant role in reducing the demand for seaborne coal. With industrial output cooling to its weakest pace in over a year, the country's need for coal has also diminished. The decline in thermal coal imports further contributes to the global trend of falling coal prices, exerting additional pressure on an already declining market.

India's reduced coal imports are part of broader efforts to cut dependence on imported fossil fuels. The country has increasingly turned to renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, which are expected to play a more significant role in meeting energy demands in the future.

Despite these efforts, coal still plays a crucial role in India's power generation mix, and the recent import decline highlights the ongoing challenges the country faces in balancing energy demand with its transition to cleaner energy sources. The trend also signals the need for sustained investment in renewable energy infrastructure and technology to reduce reliance on thermal coal imports in the long term.



Domestic Markets Slide on US Shutdown Fears Sensex Down 217, Nifty 92



Domestic stock markets fell on Monday. The indices, which started with huge gains in the morning, plunged into losses due to negative signals from international markets and negative sentiment. The reasons for this are concerns about the US economy and the shutdown situation. In addition to this, the market breadth turned red as investors started selling shares of all sectors. Except for FMCG, all sectoral indices fell. Nifty 92 and Sensex lost 217 points.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 74,332 in the previous session, started at 74,474 on Monday. It touched an intraday low of 74,022. It reached an intraday high of 74,741. Finally, it closed at 74,115, losing 217 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 22,521, touched a low of 22,429 and a high of 22,676. It closed at 22,460, down 92 points. The Nifty Bank lost 280 points and settled at 48,216. The burden of medicines required by diabetes patients will decrease. Domestic pharma companies are preparing to produce the generic version of Empagliflozin soon. GR Infra Projects has declared an interim dividend of Rs. 12.50 per share.

In Nifty50, 9 companies gained while 41 lost. FMCG shares rose. Realty, PSU bank, oil and gas, consumption, energy, auto, manufacturing, metal, healthcare, pharma, and bank indices rose. PowerGrid, Hindustan Unilever, Infi, SBI Life, Nestle, Asian Paints were the top gainers. ONGC, Trent, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Auto, Eicher Motors were the biggest losers. Market breadth on NSE today shifted in favour of sellers. Out of 2988 stocks traded, 607 gained and 2308 lost. 15 stocks touched 52-week highs. 90 stocks touched 52-week lows. 138 stocks touched the upper circuit and 162 touched the lower circuit.

Rupee weakened by 45 paise to settle at 87.33 against the dollar. Fitch has given a negative outlook rating to Adani Ener-

gy in the wake of the US probe. IndusInd Bank Jefferies maintains Buy rating, reducing target price from Rs 1200 to Rs 1080. 10 lakh shares changed hands in Infosys. Sun Pharma to acquire Check Point Therapeutics. Hudco declares second interim dividend of Rs 1.05 per share. Thermal coal imports fall for sixth consecutive month. HFCL gets Rs 44.36 crore order from Indian Army. RailTel gets Rs 28.29 crore work order from Northern Railway. 14 lakh shares changed hands in Varun Beverages. Zerodha Fund House launches Silver ETF. Tata Power signs MoU with AP Government.

Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (POWERGRID)



Power Grid is India's premier electric power transmission company, responsible for managing and expanding the country's high-voltage transmission network. Poised to benefit from ongoing government initiatives in grid modernization and integration of renewable energy sources, offering long-term stability and moderate growth.

Emami Ltd (EMAMILTD)

Emami Ltd is a diversified FMCG company with a robust portfolio in personal care, health, and wellness products. It is known for its strong brand presence and innovative product offerings. With an expanding distribution network and growing consumer demand in both urban and rural markets, Emami is well-positioned for sustained long-term growth.



Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL)

ZEEL is a leading media and entertainment company in India, operating across television broadcasting, digital content, and film production.



It holds a significant market share in Indian TV and rapidly growing digital platforms. As digital consumption accelerates and international markets expand, ZEEL is set to benefit from the growing demand for high-quality content and new distribution channels.

Solar Industries India Ltd (SOLARIND)

Solar Industries is a prominent manufacturer specializing in industrial explosives, ammonium nitrate-based fertilizers, and other chemical products, serving both agricultural and industrial sectors. With sustained demand in both agriculture and industry, Solar Industries offers moderate growth potential, although it remains exposed to commodity price volatility and market cyclicality.



JSW Energy Ltd (JSWENERGY)

Part of the JSW Group, JSW Energy is involved in power generation through a mix of thermal and renewable energy projects. The company is actively expanding its renewable energy portfolio, particularly in solar and wind power. Benefiting from India's policy push toward renewable energy and environmental sustainability, JSW Energy is well-positioned for long-term growth, though short-term performance may be influenced by fuel price volatility and regulatory shifts.



India's Wheat Production Estimated to Reach Record 115.3 Million Metric Tonnes in 2024-25

India's wheat production is projected to reach a record 115.3 million metric tonnes for the 2024-25 season, marking a 2% increase from the 113.3 million tonnes produced in 2023-24, according to the Second Advance Estimates released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare on Monday.

This year's estimated production surpasses the 2022-23 production of 110.05 million tonnes and the 2021-22 output of 107.7 million tonnes, highlighting a steady increase in wheat yields over recent years. The record wheat output is crucial as the government aims to procure 31 million tonnes of wheat during the upcoming rabi marketing season (2025-26), ensuring adequate supply for both domestic consumption and strategic reserves.

Wheat is the second-largest crop in India after paddy, contributing significantly to the country's agricultural output. The expected rise in production reflects the ongoing improvements in farming techniques, the adoption of higher-yielding wheat varieties, and favorable climatic conditions in several wheat-growing regions of the country.



The estimates of bumper wheat production are welcomed by both the agricultural community and government officials, who see it as a crucial factor in addressing food security and ensuring stable wheat prices in the domestic market. Additionally, the expected rise in procurement during the rabi marketing season will further support India's wheat stock-

piles, helping to maintain the country's strategic reserves.

As India continues to play a vital role in global agricultural markets, the record wheat output is a positive development not only for the nation's food security but also for its position as a key exporter of wheat in the global market.

Best Hydrating Foods and Drinks for a 30-Day Fitness Challenge



Staying hydrated is essential for maintaining energy, muscle function, and overall well-being, particularly during a 30-day fitness challenge. While water is the primary source of hydration, consuming the right foods and drinks can enhance electrolyte balance, aid muscle recovery, and prevent dehydration-related issues. The World Health Organisation (WHO) emphasises the importance of adequate fluid intake for optimal physical performance and body temperature regulation. Similarly, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) highlight hydration's role in endurance, cardiovascular health, and preventing cramps.

Hydrating Drinks for Fitness

1. Coconut Water – A natural source of potassium and sodium, helping replenish lost electrolytes.
2. Lemon Water – Rich in vitamin C and electrolytes, aiding digestion and hydration.
3. Herbal Teas – Caffeine-free options like chamomile and hibiscus support hydration with added health benefits.
4. Aloe Vera Juice – Promotes gut health while providing a cooling, hydrating effect.
5. Homemade Electrolyte Drinks – A mix of water, salt, honey, and citrus juice creates a natural hydration booster.

Hydrating Foods for Fitness

1. Watermelon – Composed of 92% water,

offering hydration along with vitamins and antioxidants.

2. Cucumber – A high-water-content vegetable that helps balance electrolytes.
3. Oranges – Rich in vitamin C and fluids, enhancing hydration and immunity.
4. Leafy Greens – Vegetables like spinach contain water, fibre, and minerals essential for muscle recovery.
5. Yogurt – A probiotic-rich food that supports digestion and hydration.

Tips for Staying Hydrated During Exercise

- Drink water before, during, and after workouts to prevent dehydration.
- Consume electrolyte-rich foods like bananas and avocados to replenish minerals.
- Avoid excessive caffeine and sugary beverages that may contribute to dehydration.
- Monitor urine colour, as pale yellow indicates proper hydration.
- Eat water-dense foods to naturally supplement fluid intake.

Hydration is crucial in achieving fitness goals and maintaining endurance throughout a 30-day fitness challenge. Experts from WHO and CDC stress the importance of fluid balance for both physical and cognitive performance. By making mindful dietary choices, individuals can stay hydrated, energised, and healthy during their fitness journey.

Gill's Father Does 'Bhangra' With Rishabh Pant Viral Video Breaks The Internet

Amid India's celebrations after winning the ICC Champions Trophy, vice-captain Shubman Gill's father, Lakhwinder, was seen performing bhangra with wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant. The joyous moment, captured in a viral video, has taken the internet by storm. India clinched their third Champions Trophy title on Sunday, March 9, defeating New Zealand by four wickets at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. Despite not playing a single match in the tournament, Pant joined the post-match celebrations, dancing with Lakhwinder Gill. A video posted by the BCCI also showed Lakhwinder sharing a similar moment with his son, Shubman Gill, as pacer Arshdeep Singh joined in the festivities. Shubman Gill played a crucial role in India's campaign, starting the tournament with a century in the opening match against Bangladesh on February 20. However, his subsequent performances saw moderate scores of 46, 2, 8, and 31.

Following the victory, Gill reflected on India's triumph and praised captain Rohit Sharma's leadership and aggressive batting approach. "Felt amazing. For most of the time, I sat back and enjoyed Rohit's batting. He told me it doesn't matter how far ahead or behind we are; the goal was to bat till the end. We missed

out in 2023, so it feels great to win eight ODIs back to back. Seeing his intensity and approach is incredible. He keeps telling us to give it our all, and he backs it up," said Gill in the post-match presentation.

He also lauded New Zealand's competitive spirit, acknowledging their consistency and ability to execute plans under pressure.

"New Zealand are very consistent and execute their plans well. We know they give it their all, and they showed it tonight with their resilience," he added.

Meanwhile, speculation about Rohit Sharma's future was put to rest as the India captain clarified that he has no immediate plans to retire. "No future plans, jaise chal raha hain, chalta rahega (the way it is going, it will continue that way). One more thing—I'm not retiring from this format, just to ensure no rumours are spread moving forward," Rohit stated at a press conference.

With this victory, India became the most successful team in Champions Trophy history, surpassing Australia with three titles. The team previously shared the trophy with Sri Lanka in 2002 and won their second title under MS Dhoni in 2013.



iQOO Z10 Series May Launch in April; Key Features Leaked



The iQOO Z10 series is expected to launch in China soon, with reports suggesting multiple variants, including the iQOO Z10, Z10 Turbo, Z10 Turbo Pro, and Z10x. A recent leak has revealed key details about the upcoming smartphones, including processor choices and battery specifications.

Launch Timeline and Specifications
According to a now-edited Weibo post by tipster Digital Chat Station, the iQOO Z10 and Z10 Turbo could debut in April, while the Z10x variant may arrive in the third quarter of 2025. The previous iQOO Z9 series was introduced in

April 2024, making this a likely timeframe for its successor. The base iQOO Z10 is rumored to feature a Snapdragon 7 Gen 4 SoC and a 1.5K OLED display. Meanwhile, the Z10 Turbo may be powered by MediaTek Dimensity 8400, and the high-end Z10 Turbo Pro is expected to come with a Snapdragon 8s Elite chipset. While iQOO has yet to confirm the details, the rumored specifications indicate a performance-focused lineup with high battery capacities and fast charging capabilities. More information is expected to surface as the official launch approaches.

Seasoning vs. Flavouring: What's The Difference?



The taste of food is shaped by the ingredients and techniques used in cooking. While both seasoning and flavouring enhance a dish, they serve different purposes in bringing out its best flavors.

Have you ever followed a recipe precisely, yet something still felt off? You added all the right ingredients, but the dish lacked depth. Then, with just a pinch of salt or a dash of spice, the flavors suddenly came alive. That's the magic of seasoning and flavouring—but did you know they're not the same thing?

Many people use these terms interchangeably, but they play distinct roles in enhancing food. Whether you're new to cooking or just looking to refine your understanding, here's what sets them apart.

What is Seasoning?

Seasoning amplifies the natural taste of ingredients without altering their original flavor. It enhances, rather than transforms, the dish. The most common seasoning is salt—it doesn't add a new taste but brings out

the existing flavors. A bowl of dal or khichdi, for instance, tastes bland without salt but becomes instantly more flavorful with just the right amount.

Other examples of seasoning include pepper, cumin (jeera), and asafoetida (hing), which subtly boost a dish's taste without overpowering it. Seasoning ensures that food tastes its best without changing its inherent profile.

What is Flavouring?

Flavouring, on the other hand, introduces a new taste to a dish. Unlike seasoning, which enhances, flavouring transforms. For example, adding cardamom (elaichi) to chai gives it a distinct aroma and taste, while a few drops of vanilla extract completely alter the flavor of a plain cake batter.

Flavouring ingredients such as kasuri methi, ginger, garlic, tamarind, and saffron define a dish's signature taste. Can you imagine butter chicken without kasuri methi? It simply wouldn't be the same. These ingredients are strong and shape the final taste of the dish, making flavouring a

Hidden Supermassive Black Hole May Lurk in Large Magellanic Cloud

A hidden supermassive black hole may be lurking within the Large Magellanic Cloud (LMC), a satellite galaxy of the Milky Way, according to new research. Scientists believe the discovery of hypervelocity stars—stars moving at extraordinary speeds—may provide evidence of a massive, yet-undetected black hole in the LMC.

Evidence from Hypervelocity Stars

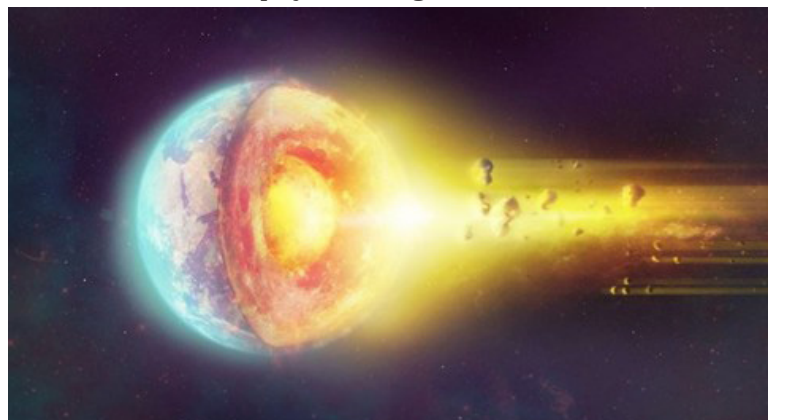
Using data from the European Space Agency's Gaia satellite, researchers tracked 21 hypervelocity stars at the edge of the Milky Way. While many were propelled by Sagittarius A* (Sgr A*), the black hole at the center of our galaxy, a significant number appeared to have originated from the LMC. This unexpected trajectory led scientists to theorize that a supermassive black hole within the LMC may have been responsible for accelerating these stars.

Jesse Han, an astrophysicist

at the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian (CfA), called the possibility of another supermassive black hole so close to the Milky Way a striking revelation. He also noted that black holes are notoriously difficult to detect, making this discovery particularly significant. Potential Mass and Implications

Estimates suggest that this hidden black hole could have a mass of around 600,000 times that of the Sun—smaller than Sagittarius A* (4.3 million solar masses) but still within the expected range for supermassive black holes.

Scott Lucchini, another researcher at CfA, pointed out that these findings challenge the idea that the Milky Way is the only nearby galaxy ejecting hypervelocity stars due to a supermassive black hole. The results align with previous theories suggesting that the LMC could host a powerful, unseen gravitational force.



Rohit Sharma Clears Air on 2027 World Cup Plans After Champions Trophy Triumph



India captain Rohit Sharma has put to rest all speculation regarding his ODI future after leading the team to a historic unbeaten triumph in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. Following the victory, Rohit categorically dismissed retirement talks, saying, "I am not going to retire from this format. Just to make sure no rumours are spread moving forward."

However, when asked about his participation in the 2027 ODI World Cup, the 38-year-old stated that he prefers to take things one step at a time. "Right now, I am taking things as they come. It wouldn't be fair for me to think too far ahead. At this moment, my focus is on playing well and maintaining the

right mindset," Rohit said on Jio Hotstar. Reflecting on India's flawless campaign in the Champions Trophy, Rohit took immense pride in the team's consistency. "We went undefeated despite losing all five tosses, yet we still won the trophy. Winning a tournament without a single defeat is a massive achievement," he said. Shifting the Mindset for Success Rohit credited India's triumph to a change in mindset, shifting focus from individual milestones to collective success. "Before the 2023 World Cup, we had discussions about not prioritizing personal achievements. I learned this the hard way in 2019—I

scored five centuries, but in the end, we didn't win the trophy. That's when I realized, it's all about the team's success." He also highlighted how preparation played a key role. "After the Australia tour, we had 20-25 days to analyze conditions. We studied T20 matches to assess the pitches and picked our squad accordingly." Looking ahead, Rohit made it clear that he wants India to be seen as an indomitable force. "I don't want to dictate how other teams should see us. The only thing I want is for them never to take us lightly. Even if we are five wickets down, we have the ability to fight back and turn the game around."

Barcelona vs Osasuna La Liga Match Called Off Minutes Before Kick-Off



Barcelona's La Liga match against Osasuna was postponed on Saturday, just 20 minutes before kick-off, following the sudden death of first-team doctor Carles Minarro Garcia. The tragic incident led the club to reschedule the fixture for a later date. "Barcelona is sorry to announce the sad news of the death of first-team doctor Carles Minarro Garcia this afternoon," the club said in a statement. "For this reason, the match between Barcelona and Osasuna has been postponed until a later date." Barcelona president Joan Laporta expressed his grief, calling the news

"heartbreaking and shocking." "We contacted his mother and his wife to express our condolences and support them in this incredibly painful time. It is our duty to stand by them," he said. The 53-year-old doctor leaves behind his wife and two children. Players and fans were stunned by the sudden development. Barcelona midfielder Pedri shared his disbelief on Instagram, writing, "I still can't believe it. A big hug to the family and friends of Carles." Osasuna president Luis Sabalza fully supported the decision to postpone the game. "Life is the most important thing.

You can't play a match when someone so close to the team is no longer there," he told DAZN. Osasuna also expressed their condolences on social media, writing, "Osasuna wishes to convey its deepest condolences to the family of doctor Carles Minarro Garcia and send a big hug to all the staff of Barcelona, as well as their fans. May he rest in peace." This is the second La Liga fixture to be postponed in recent days. On Monday, Villarreal's match against Espanyol was also called off due to a heavy rain alert in the region.

"India Would Have Won Anywhere" Wasim Akram Shuts Down Champions Trophy Debate

Pakistan cricket legend Wasim Akram has dismissed the debate surrounding India's Champions Trophy 2025 triumph, asserting that India would have won the tournament regardless of the venue. India played all their matches in Dubai, avoiding travel to Pakistan, which led to discussions about whether they had an unfair advantage. However, Akram made it clear that India's dominance was undeniable. "This Indian team would have won it anywhere in the world," Akram said on the Dressing Room show on Sports Central. "Yes, people talked about India playing in Dubai, but even if they had

played in Pakistan, they would have won there as well." Akram highlighted India's back-to-back ICC title victories, pointing out that they remained unbeaten in both the T20 World Cup 2024 and the Champions Trophy 2025. "Winning two global tournaments without losing a game shows their depth and leadership," he added. Despite setbacks in Test cricket—including series losses against New Zealand, Australia, and Sri Lanka—India stuck with their leadership duo of Rohit Sharma and Gautam Gambhir. Akram praised this decision, saying, "There was pressure to change the captain and

coach, but BCCI backed them. Now, they are champions of the champions."



Who Is RJ Mahvash? Mystery girl shares photos with Chahal after India's win



India's thrilling victory against New Zealand in the Champions Trophy 2025 final not only brought joy to cricket fans but also sparked online speculation surrounding cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal and YouTuber RJ Mahvash. Their joint appearance at the Dubai stadium has fueled fresh rumors about their relationship. Chahal, who is currently going through a divorce with his wife Dhanashree Verma, was seen enjoying the match alongside Mahvash. After India's win, Mahvash shared photos and videos from the stadium, captioning them, "Kaha tha na jita ke aungi (Told you I'd make India win) I am good luck for team India!" The post quickly gained traction, adding to the ongoing speculation. This isn't the first time the duo has been spotted together. In December, pictures of them celebrating Christmas together had already set social media abuzz. At the time, Mahvash dismissed the dating rumors as baseless, while Chahal requested fans to respect their privacy, stating that such speculations had caused emotional distress to

his family. **Who Is RJ Mahvash?** RJ Mahvash, a popular content creator known for her prank videos and humorous takes, hails from Aligarh. The 28-year-old, whose name means "Beautiful like the moon" in Persian, celebrates her birthday on October 27. She holds a Bachelor's degree from Aligarh Muslim University and a Master's in Mass Communication from Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi. Mahvash initially started as a radio jockey but gained massive recognition through her digital content. Despite receiving offers from Bigg Boss 14 and Bollywood, she chose to focus on her social media career. While neither Chahal nor Mahvash has confirmed any romantic relationship, their frequent public appearances continue to keep social media buzzing with reactions. One user humorously commented, "Hum jeet gye aur Chahal bhai v pighal gye (We won, and Chahal got impressed)," while another added, "Jindagi toh Chahal bhai jee rahe hai (Chahal is winning at life)."

Max Verstappen Eyes Fifth Title in F1's 75th Anniversary Season, Hamilton Joins Ferrari



The 2025 Formula One season promises high-intensity battles as the sport celebrates 75 years since its inception in 1950. With 24 races on the calendar, the competition is set to be fierce, with Max Verstappen aiming for his fifth consecutive title, while Lewis Hamilton's move to Ferrari adds a major twist to the championship. The season kicks off in Australia this Sunday, featuring six rookies eager to make their mark. Seventy-five years after Giuseppe Farina won the first-ever F1 title, Max Verstappen begins his quest to join Michael Schumacher as the only driver to win five consecutive world championships. The Dutchman dominated early in 2024 but suffered a 10-race winless streak, allowing McLaren, Mercedes, and

Ferrari to close the gap. Despite this, he clinched his fourth title in Las Vegas with two races to spare. However, Lando Norris is seen as a major threat in 2025, with betting odds placing him as the title favorite over Verstappen. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and new signing Lewis Hamilton are also expected to challenge for the crown. Testing in Bahrain provided mixed signals, with Mercedes, Williams, and McLaren topping different days. Ferrari looked strong, while Red Bull's Verstappen showed promise on the final day. McLaren CEO Zak Brown believes the field is tighter than ever, stating, "I can see it being super competitive. Last year, four teams won multiple races—this year, it could be even more."



Rajinikanth's Jailer 2 Begins Filming "Muthuvel Pandian's Hunt Begins"



The highly anticipated sequel to Rajinikanth's blockbuster Jailer has officially gone on floors. Titled Jailer 2, the film marks the superstar's second collaboration with director Nelson Dilipkumar and is produced by Kalanithi Maran's Sun Pictures. Announcing the shoot, Sun Pictures unveiled a striking new poster on Instagram with the caption, "Muthuvel Pandian's hunt begins! #Jailer2 shoot starts today."

A Grand Sequel in the Making

The makers had previously confirmed Jailer 2 in January with an announcement teaser featuring Nelson Dilipkumar and music composer Anirudh Ravichander. The video, shot inside a Goa beach house, showed the duo discussing their next project, ultimately revealing the return of Rajinikanth as Muthuvel Pandian.

While the cast of Jailer 2 remains under wraps, the film is expected to continue the legacy of its prequel, which was one of Tamil cinema's highest-grossing films of all time. Released in 2023, Jailer followed the story of a retired jail warden who embarks on a deadly mission after his son goes missing.

The first installment featured Vinayakan, Ramya Krishnan, Vasanth Ravi, and Yogi Babu, with special appearances by Mohanlal, Shiva Rajkumar, and Jackie Shroff. Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, who made waves with her hit song Kaavaalaa, had previously praised Rajinikanth, calling him "the most humble superstar" in an interview. Apart from Jailer 2, Rajinikanth is also working on Coolie, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj. He was last seen in Lal Salaam, directed by his daughter Aishwaryaa Rajinikanth.

"Blaming Women...": Dhanashree Verma's Cryptic Post



Choreographer and social media influencer Dhanashree Verma has once again grabbed attention amid her ongoing divorce case with Indian cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal. Following weeks of speculation and media reports, she posted a cryptic message on Instagram that read, "Blaming women is always in fashion." The post came just a day after Chahal was spotted at the Champions Trophy 2025 final in Dubai alongside YouTuber

RJ Mahvash. This has led to fresh speculation, with some social media users linking her statement to Chahal, while others believe it refers to the online trolling she has faced in recent times. Rumors of Chahal and Dhanashree's separation have been circulating for months, with reports suggesting that their divorce had already been finalized. However, Dhanashree's lawyer, Aditi Mohan, dismissed these claims, stating, "I have

no comments to make on the proceedings. The matter is currently sub judice. The media should fact-check before reporting, as a lot of misleading information is being circulated."

One of the most viral claims alleged that Dhanashree had demanded ₹60 crore as alimony. In response, her family issued a strong statement, completely rejecting these reports.

"We are deeply outraged by the baseless claims about the alimony figure. Let me be absolutely clear—no such amount has ever been asked, demanded, or even offered. Reckless reporting like this only causes harm, and we urge the media to fact-check before spreading misinformation and respect everyone's privacy," the statement read.

While neither Chahal nor Dhanashree has officially confirmed their divorce status, their cryptic social media posts continue to fuel public curiosity.

Chhaava Telugu Scores Big at Box Office Despite CT Final



Telugu audiences have once again proven their love for good cinema as Chhaava, the historical epic directed by Laxman Utekar and produced by Dinesh Vijan, continues its strong run at the box office. Released in Telugu by Geetha Arts, the film has performed exceptionally well despite competition from the Champions Trophy final.

While the opening two days saw impressive numbers, Day 2 surpassed Day 1, setting high expectations. Many predicted a dip on Sunday due to the cricket final, but Chhaava Telugu maintained its momentum, collecting nearly the same as Day 2. The film has grossed ₹9.46 crore in three days, proving that strong word of mouth is driving audiences to the-

aters despite being a dubbed release.

Renowned production house Geetha Arts took up the challenge of completing the dubbing in record time, ensuring the film reached Telugu audiences with high-quality localization. Their dedication is now yielding big rewards at the box office.

Viewers are showering praise on the performances of Vicky Kaushal, Rashmika Mandanna, and Akshaye Khanna, while the film's authentic portrayal of the unsung Maratha warrior king, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, is earning widespread acclaim.

With its phenomenal box office numbers, Chhaava Telugu is poised to set new benchmarks for Hindi-dubbed films in the Telugu market.

When Roshan meets Sheela



The IIFA Awards stage witnessed a euphoric moment when Katrina Kaif made a rare appearance and joined Kartik Aaryan to perform the hookstep of the Bhool Bhulaiyaa title track. The moment turned even more special as Kartik

took on the role of a dance instructor, guiding Katrina through the iconic steps that have become a signature of the horror-comedy franchise.

Kartik, who won the Best Actor award for his performance in Bhool Bhulaiyaa

3, looked dapper in a midnight blue formal suit, while Katrina stunned in an ivory-hued outfit. Their electrifying stage presence and effortless chemistry left fans in awe, making it one of the most talked-about highlights of the event.

Samantha's New Pic With Raj Nidimoru Sparks Dating Buzz



Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu is once again making headlines over her personal life after a picture of her with director Raj Nidimoru went viral on social media. The duo, who worked together on the Amazon Prime series Citadel: Honey Bunny, were seen attending a friend's birthday brunch, fueling fresh dating

speculation. In the widely circulated picture, Samantha is seen wearing a stylish green dress, while Raj Nidimoru keeps it casual. Their chemistry has become a talking point, especially after another viral moment from February 1, when Samantha shared photos from the World Pickleball League match. One of

the pictures showed her holding hands with Raj Nidimoru, adding to the rumors. Samantha was previously married to Naga Chaitanya, but the couple announced their divorce in 2021. Recently, Naga Chaitanya tied the knot with actress Sobhita Dhulipala on December 4, 2024, in a traditional Telugu ceremony, bringing

renewed attention to Samantha's past relationship. Samantha's Professional Front Samantha was last seen in Citadel: Honey Bunny, co-starring Varun Dhawan. On the big screen, she appeared in Kushi (2023) alongside Vijay Deverakonda.

Raj Nidimoru, best known as one half of the director duo Raj & DK, has helmed successful projects like The Family Man, Guns & Gulaabs, and Farzi. He has also directed films such as Shor In The City and Go Goa Gone. While neither Samantha nor Raj Nidimoru have addressed the dating rumors, their repeated public appearances have kept fans speculating.

Hrithik Roshan Injured During Song Rehearsals With Jr NTR

Bollywood superstar Hrithik Roshan has suffered a leg injury while rehearsing for a song in War 2, where he shares screen space with Jr NTR for the first time. The injury has forced the actor to take a four-week break, leading to a postponement of the song shoot to May 2025. Originally, the film's team planned to complete the song shoot before proceeding with the remaining talkie portions. However, with Hrithik's injury, the schedule has been altered. Despite the delay, the makers remain committed to releasing the film on August 14, 2025.

Sources reveal that Hrithik pushed himself beyond limits during rehearsals, leading to a niggle in his leg. After a medical evaluation, doctors advised him to rest for a month to ensure a full recovery. Though the setback is disappointing, fans can

expect Hrithik to return with renewed energy. Current Status of War 2 Most of the talkie portions have been completed, and the team is now focusing on marketing strategies ahead of the theatrical release. Directed by Ayan Mukerji, War 2 is one of the most anticipated films of 2025, bring-

ing together Hrithik Roshan and Jr NTR in a high-octane action spectacle. Yash Raj Films (YRF) is producing the sequel as part of its spy universe, following the massive success of War (2019). War 2 is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release on August 14, 2025.

