

POINT

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD H 35° C L 21° C	VIJAYAWADA H 36° C L 23° C	TIRUPATHI H 36° C L 23° C
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KINGPIN OF LIQUOR SCAM MITHUN REDDY... ?

- **Mithun Reddy Accused in ₹3,113 Crore Liquor Scam**
- **Mithun Reddy accused as key mastermind**
- **TDP post on scam goes viral on social media**

TPN Kishore Katta | Andhra Pradesh

YSRCP MP Mithun Reddy is under fire over his alleged role in the ₹3,113 crore liquor scam during the previous YSRCP government. TDP's social media post accusing him of massive corruption has reignited the controversy. Despite the coalition government vowing to expose the scam, the case is progressing slowly, raising questions about potential political deals to protect key players.

Before the 2019 elections, Jagan Mohan Reddy promised liquor prohibition but later introduced government-controlled liquor sales. Reports suggest low-quality liquor, secret commissions, and price manipulation led to huge public outrage, contributing to YSRCP's electoral defeat. The CID's investigation points to Mithun Reddy as the key figure behind rigging liquor supply contracts, collecting bribes, and running a hawala network for fund transfers.

The liquor trade was monopolized by a few companies handpicked by the YSRCP leadership. Allegedly, bribes of ₹150-450 per liquor case were taken, generating ₹60 crore per month—totaling ₹3,113 crore. The CID probe revealed that SPY Agro Industries and other distilleries were controlled through benami companies linked to YSRCP leaders.

TDP alleges that Mithun Reddy managed liquor supply contracts, ensuring only companies willing to pay bribes got orders. This led to huge price hikes, directly burdening consumers. The TDP post claims this scam is 10 times bigger than the Delhi liquor scam.

With public anger mounting, the question remains—Will the coalition government act against Mithun Reddy, or will the case be brushed aside?

Belt Shops 20 times More Than Wine Shops in AP

TPN Correspondent | Andhra Pradesh

After coming to power, the coalition government abolished state-run liquor stores and returned to the private auction system for wine shops. However, the decision to reduce commissions for wine shop owners led to unexpected consequences. Shop owners, anticipating huge profits after five years, were disappointed and devised alternative plans to regain lost income. Their solution? Expanding belt shops, which are now running on an unprecedented scale.

During the previous YSRCP government, belt shops operated illegally, but under the current administration, they function more openly. Reports indicate that local MLAs, excise officials, and police personnel are involved in facilitating this illegal trade. While Andhra Pradesh has 3,396 licensed wine shops, an estimated 50,000+ belt shops are operating across the state, selling liquor at inflated prices. The belt shop business follows a high-profit model. If a liquor bottle costs ₹100 at a licensed shop, it is sold at ₹120 to belt shop operators, who then resell it at ₹140, generating a ₹40 per bottle margin. This additional revenue is reportedly shared among certain MLAs, excise officials, and local authorities, allowing the illegal business to thrive unchecked.

Coalition government abolished state-run liquor shops

Liquor sales resumed through private auction system



Over **50,000** belt shops running across the state

Allegations of **MLAs and excise officials'** involvement

Women protest against rising liquor accessibility

Earlier, belt shops were not as widespread in AP, but during the YSRCP government, restricted liquor shop hours fueled their growth. Many expected the coalition government to eliminate them, but instead, the problem has intensified. Belt shops are now operating in full public view, with some even setting up tents to conduct sales. Women, who initially welcomed

the coalition's liquor policy changes, are now furious over the growing belt shop menace. Many believe that uncontrolled belt shops contributed to YSRCP's downfall and warn that if the government fails to act, public trust could erode further. The key question remains—will the government crack down on belt shops or allow the problem to escalate further?



AP Govt Orders Inquiry into Aadudam Andhra Scam

- **ACB to investigate Aadudam Andhra irregularities**
- **Allegations of misappropriation exceeding ₹400 cr**
- **₹119 crore spent in just 45 days**
- **MLAs demand a full-scale probe**

TPN Correspondent | Andhra Pradesh

The Andhra Pradesh government has ordered an inquiry into the Aadudam Andhra program, citing large-scale financial irregularities during the previous YSRCP regime. The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has been tasked with investigating all allegations and discrepancies related to the program.

Aadudam Andhra was launched as a statewide sports initiative, allegedly aimed at attracting young voters before the elections. However, questions arose over its exorbitant spending, with ₹119 crore used in just 45 days. During the recent Legislative Assembly Question Hour, Sports Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy acknowledged the massive expenditure. Several MLAs, including Gauthu Sirisha and Bhuma Akhilapriya, claimed the actual scam might exceed ₹400 crore and demanded a thorough investigation.

Legislators pointed out that district funds were also misused for Aadudam Andhra, raising further concerns. Additionally, it was alleged that ₹2 crore was allocated for a closing ceremony that the CM did not even attend, with an extra ₹3 crore added at the last minute. Lawmakers suspect that public funds were deliberately misused, and commissions were pocketed through excessive spending on kits and perishable goods.

There are also serious allegations against former minister Roja, who was responsible for the event at that time. Many believe that Aadudam Andhra was not a genuine sports initiative but a political gimmick, with athletes being sidelined and funds being diverted.

In response to these revelations, the coalition government has decided on a full-scale ACB investigation. Officials have confirmed that strict action will be taken against those found guilty, once the ACB submits its report. The probe is expected to expose deeper financial mismanagement in the Aadudam Andhra program.



Ganja posing challenge to Pawan @ Pithapuram?

- **Pithapuram gains national attention after Pawan's victory**
- **Ganja consumption rising despite government change**
- **Youth addicted, causing panic among motorists**

TPN Kishore Katta | Pithapuram

Pithapuram, once a small town, has now become a nationally recognized name ever since Jana Sena President and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan contested and won here. His victory gave hope to the people that Pithapuram would see rapid development. True to his word, as soon as he assumed office, he prioritized road repairs and other infrastructure projects. People placed their trust in him, believing development works would follow in phases.

However, while progress is visible in many areas, one serious issue continues to trouble residents—ganja abuse. Under the previous YSRCP government, the ganja trade was rampant, with the drug easily available. Many expected that with the alliance government taking charge, strict measures would be implemented. Yet, even after 10 months in power, no significant improvement is seen. In Pithapuram, youth are reported-

ly consuming ganja in large numbers near Gorsa Railway Gate and Madhavpuram Railway Gate underground bridges, creating panic for two-wheeler riders and passers-by. Locals allege that law enforcement officials are turning a blind eye to the issue, raising serious concerns about accountability. During his election campaign, Pawan Kalyan assured that rehabilitation centers would be set up to help addicted youth. He also promised strict measures to eliminate ganja trade. However, with the current situation spiraling out of control, residents feel betrayed. Cases of road robberies and mobile thefts have increased, fueling frustration among the people. Despite his strong stance before elections, Pawan's silence on the issue is raising doubts. If such a situation exists in the Deputy CM's own constituency, what about the rest of the state? People are now demanding immediate action, including increased police surveillance.

WHO IS PROTECTING ROJA?



TPN Correspondent | Andhra Pradesh

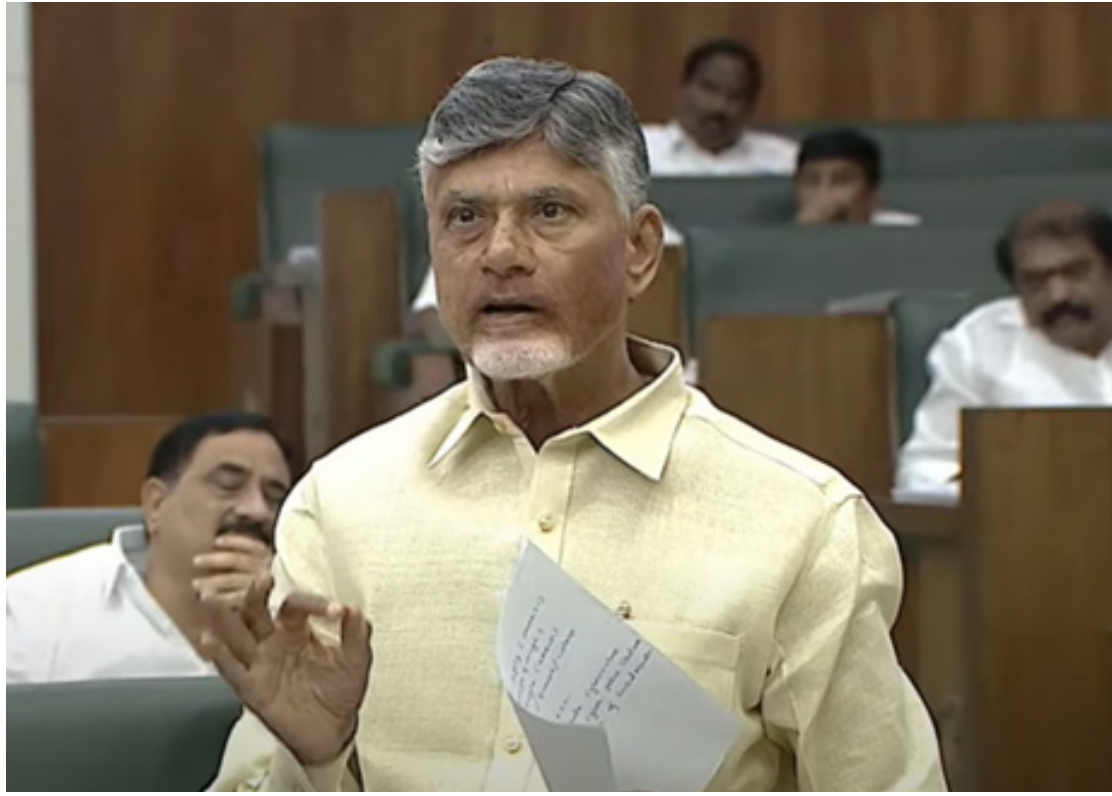
While several YSRCP leaders are facing cases and arrests, former minister Roja remains untouched despite multiple allegations. Recently, TDP leader Panchumarthy Anuradha alleged land encroachments by Roja in Tadepalli. There are also accusations that scams took place during her tenure, yet no complaint has been officially registered, nor has the CID initiated any probe.

During Assembly discussions, former minister Bhuma Akhilapriya, MLA Adireddy Vasu, and Gauthu Sirisha raised concerns about irregularities in Andhra-related dealings. In response, Minister Ramprasad Reddy assured a report in 45 days. However, the delay is raising suspicions, as it has been nearly a year since the coalition came to power, and no official action has been taken.

A strong debate is brewing over who is shielding Roja. While many YSRCP leaders are fearful of legal troubles, Roja not only defied Jagan Mohan Reddy over

No Tolerance for Lawlessness, Strong Action on Crime - CM Naidu

- Strict action against law and order violations
- "Eagle" system to curb drug trafficking
- Land Grabbing Prohibition Act to be introduced
- Special agencies at borders to prevent drug trade



TPN Correspondent | Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has made it clear that his government will not tolerate any disruption of law and order in the state. Speak-

ing in the legislative assembly, he emphasized that stringent action would be taken against crimes, particularly those targeting women and children. He introduced the 'Shakti' app for women's safety and warned the police of strict consequences if

they fail in their duties. Naidu criticized the previous government for its failure to maintain law and order, stating that people lived in fear and government properties were left unprotected. He asserted that his government would ensure peace and security across Andhra Pradesh.

CM Naidu blamed the past administration for the rise in drug abuse and marijuana cultivation. He recalled how the TDP, as the opposition, raised concerns but was attacked for speaking out. Announcing the implementation of the 'Eagle' system, he assured that organized drug networks would be dismantled, modern surveillance would be used, and alternative employment would be provided for those dependent on marijuana cultivation.

Naidu announced a new law to curb land grabbing, accusing the previous government of manipulating land records and seizing properties meant for the poor. He assured drone surveillance, night patrolling, and the establishment of 26 cyber security stations to prevent crimes.

CM Naidu recalled the 2018 Dachepalli rape case and introduced the 'Shakti' app, which allows women to instantly alert police in emergencies. He criticized the failure of the previous government's 'Disha' app and warned that police officials would be held accountable if women's safety is compromised.

Naidu reaffirmed his government's commitment to ensuring justice, eliminating political violence, and maintaining law and order across the state.



India Will Require 30k Pilots in Next 15 Years, Says Union Minister Rammohan Naidu

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu has announced that India will require 30,000 pilots over the next 15-20 years to meet the rapid expansion of the aviation sector. Speaking at an event for the purchase of 200 training aircraft, he highlighted the growing demand for pilots as airlines continue to expand their fleets.

Currently, over 800 aircraft are in service in India, with 6,700 pilots actively working. Naidu revealed that various airlines have placed orders for more than 1,700 new aircraft, which will enter service in the coming years. To support this growth, the government is focused on making India a major aviation training hub. Officials have also initiated an inspection and rating process for 38 flying training organizations (FTOs) to enhance training quality.

A key step in this direction is the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on Tuesday between the Aero Club of India and Shakti Aircraft Industries. This agreement aims to provide indigenously manufactured training aircraft to India's FTOs, reducing reliance on imports and strengthening the domestic aviation training ecosystem.

Minister Naidu emphasized that training aircraft are the backbone of pilot development and that this initiative will be a game-changer in empowering the next generation of skilled pilots. The MoU signing was attended by Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh, Aero Club of India Chairman Rajiv Pratap Rudy, and Shakti Aviation Chairman Dr. M Manikam, among others.



Minister Nara Lokesh on Three-Language Policy, Calls for Balanced Approach

TPN Correspondent | Amaravati

Amid the ongoing debate between the Central government and the Tamil Nadu government over the three-language policy, Andhra Pradesh IT and Education Minister Nara Lokesh made key remarks. Speaking in Amaravati on Tuesday, he criticized the unnecessary political controversy surrounding language policies and stressed the importance of protecting one's mother tongue.

Minister Lokesh pointed out that while political parties are clashing over language policies, students in India, including those from Andhra Pradesh, are already learning foreign languages such as German and Japanese. He questioned the approach to the three-language policy, emphasizing that linguistic diversity should not be a matter of political conflict.

The Central government has been gradually pushing for the implementation of the three-language policy, which has drawn strong opposition from Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin. Stalin has repeatedly expressed concerns that the policy might threaten regional languages. His party has actively protested, with an MP even wearing a black T-shirt in Parliament to oppose the move. Political parties in Tamil Nadu remain firm on their two-language policy and have rejected any attempt to impose Hindi.

Meanwhile, as the second phase of the budget session of Parliament began on March 10, opposition parties have intensified their protests on various issues, including language policy. Minister Lokesh's comments reflect a broader perspective, highlighting that while language policies remain a subject of political dispute, youth across the country are increasingly eager to learn international languages for global opportunities.

WHO IS...

Continued from page 1

the Nagari seat issue but is also making a comeback into television business. This has led to speculation that a top film hero, close to the CM, is lobbying for Roja. Interestingly, this actor was once a good friend of Roja during her film career.

The TDP ranks are questioning—Why has no case been filed against Roja yet? Why has no investigation begun? Similar lobbying efforts were seen in Peddi Reddy's case, and now Roja's name is emerging in similar discussions. While some suspect Kodali Nani's influence, many are pointing towards Roja's high-level political backing. It remains to be seen whether the government will take action or let the matter fade away.

Kurnool Court Grants Bail to Posani Krishna Murali



TPN Correspondent | Kurnool

The Kurnool First Additional Junior Civil Judge Court has granted bail to well-known film actor Posani Krishna Murali. The court, after hearing arguments for five days on his bail petition, approved his release on a surety of ₹20,000 along with two sureties.

In addition to the Kurnool case, Posani has also secured bail in the Bhavanipuram case from the Vijayawada court. He is currently lodged in Kurnool jail but is expected to be released today.

On Monday, the Narasaraopet District Court also granted him bail, clearing the way for his release.

CRDA Approves ₹37,702 Crore for Amaravati Development

- ₹37,702 Cr worth Amaravati works approved
- 59 tenders cleared; work to start immediately
- ₹31,000 Cr funds secured through loans
- Land auctions to fund Amaravati's development



TPN Correspondent | Amaravati

The Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) has approved ₹37,702.15 crore worth of tenders for Amaravati's development. State Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister Ponguru Narayana announced that these

approvals will be finalized in the cabinet meeting on March 17, after which work will begin immediately.

Speaking at the State Secretariat, Narayana stated that tenders were invited for 73 projects worth ₹48,012 crore, of which 59 tenders worth ₹37,702.15 crore were approved. These include 22 CRDA projects worth ₹22,607.11

crore and 37 ADC projects worth ₹15,095.04 crore. Two additional tenders will be opened on March 17, while tenders for 19 more projects, including an iconic bridge, embankment roads, and the NTR statue, will be issued by month-end.

The estimated cost of Amaravati's development is ₹64,000 crore. Narayana assured that no taxpayer money would be used, as funds will be raised through land auctions. The government has secured ₹31,000 crore, including ₹15,000 crore from the World Bank, ₹11,000 crore from HUDCO, and ₹5,000 crore from various banks.

Of the 6,203 acres available with CRDA, 1,900 acres have been allocated to institutions, with 4,000 acres still remaining. As infrastructure progresses, land values are expected to rise, further supporting funding through auctions. The government has allocated ₹6,000 crore in the budget for Amaravati's development.

Additionally, a meeting of the Group of Ministers approved land allotments to 31 institutions, modified the locations of two institutions, and extended timelines for 11 others.

Minister Nadendla Manohar Slams YCP Spreading False Propaganda & Misleading Youth

- YCP deceived youth and students, now staging fake protests
- Jagan used volunteers politically and later abandoned them
- Preparations underway for Jana Sena's Aavirbhav Sabha



TPN Correspondent | Kakinada
State Food and Civil Supplies Minister and Jana Sena Party Political Affairs Committee Chairman Nadendla Manohar slammed the YSR Congress Party (YCP) for misleading youth and students for five years and now engaging in false struggles. Speaking at a media conference in Kakinada on Tuesday, he accused YCP of pushing the state into crisis with its misgovernance and lack of transparency. "The plight of students and unemployed youth present is due to YCP's ill-considered decisions. They misled the people and now act as if they are fighting for them," he said. Nadendla Manohar pointed out

that Jagan Mohan Reddy falsely claimed to have created 44 lakh jobs, including volunteers, but failed to extend their service. "Before elections, Jagan promised salary hikes for volunteers but never committed to renewing their contracts. The new government reviewed reports and found that their tenure had already expired under YCP rule," he stated. Elaborate arrangements are being made for Aavirbhav Sabha at Chitrada in Pithapuram constituency. Committees have been formed for logistics, security, and medical

arrangements. "We are deploying 14 ambulances, seven medical camps, and five parking zones. LED screens are set up for better visibility, and cultural programs will highlight our heritage. Common citizens will be given a platform to speak," Manohar said. Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh confirmed that security measures are being finalized. "Jana Sena President Pawan Kalyan will outline the party's future direction, and we are ensuring a well-organized event," he added.

Did Jagan Donate ₹1 Crore to Flood Victims? Parthasarathi vs. Botsa



TPN Correspondent | Amaravati
A heated debate erupted in the AP Legislative Council over YSRCP

chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's past announcement of a ₹1 crore donation for Vijayawada flood victims. Opposition leader Botsa Satyanarayana claimed that Jagan had fulfilled his promise by giving the amount to the affected people. However, Minister Parthasarathi countered the claim, stating that

Jagan had not donated the money to the government. Botsa defended his stance, explaining that YSRCP distributed the aid directly because they did not trust the coalition government to handle the funds properly. He insisted that he personally oversaw the distribution of relief to ensure that the victims received the promised amount. In response, State Home Minister Anitha stated that if there were any doubts regarding the donation, she was ready to form an inquiry committee to investigate the matter. She emphasized the importance of transparency in relief efforts and assured that the government would get to the bottom of the issue.

YS Sharmila Accuses Govt of Betraying Anganwadis

TPN Correspondent | Amaravati
AP Congress President YS Sharmila has accused the coalition government of betraying Anganwadi workers, despite promising justice upon assuming power. Responding to their ongoing protests, she strongly condemned the government's failure to address their demands and criticized the detention of protesting Anganwadis, calling it an act of tyranny. Sharmila stated that the demands of Anganwadis are completely legitimate and insisted that the government immediately hold discussions with them. She warned that

if the government fails to act, the Congress Party will launch large-scale agitations. The key demands of Anganwadi workers include:

- A monthly honorarium of ₹26,000
- Gratuity payment guarantee
- Recognition of mini Anganwadi centers as main centers
- Clear guidelines on promotions for helpers
- Filling of pending vacancies immediately
- Compensation of ₹20,000 and a job for families of deceased Anganwadi workers

Apart from these, Sharmila urged



the government to address 12 additional demands and make an official announcement in the ongoing assembly session. She warned that if the government continues to neglect them, the Congress Party will intensify protests across the state.

Jagan Should Resign If He Skips Assembly - CPI Narayana

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
National Secretary K. Narayana has strongly criticized YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for skipping assembly sessions. He demanded that Jagan resign if he continues to avoid his legislative responsibilities, stating that an elected leader must be accountable to the people.

Narayana also spoke on the issue of delimitation, which has sparked debate across the country. He pointed out that if Lok Sabha constituencies are re-structured, the southern states would see an increase of only 14 seats, whereas northern states would gain around 150 seats. He accused the Central government of pushing an unfair policy that could widen the north-south divide. "The Center's stance is dangerous. If they continue like this for another five years, the country will be split into two," Narayana warned, urging political parties from the south to unite and oppose the move.

Minister Kondapalli Srinivas Lashes Out at Officials

TPN Correspondent | Amaravati
State Industries Minister Kondapalli Srinivas expressed his anger at his department officials during the ongoing AP Assembly and Council meetings. The Minister was visibly frustrated when his question in the Legislative Council went unanswered due to the officials' lack of preparation. During the proceedings, Minister Srinivas sharply questioned his department's staff, demanding to know why they were not ready with a response. He criticized their negligence and asked, "What were

you doing outside the Council?" Expressing his displeasure, he ordered the officials to submit a written explanation detailing why they failed to prepare the necessary answer. This incident has sparked discussions about coordination issues within government departments, with the Minister making it clear that he would not tolerate inefficiency in handling Assembly and Council matters.



Speaker Ayyanna Patrudu Invites MLAs to Sports Competitions

- Sports and cultural events to ease MLAs' stress
- Competitions scheduled for March 18th-20th
- CM Chandrababu Naidu to present awards to winners



TPN Correspondent | Amaravati
Andhra Pradesh Assembly Speaker Chintakayala Ayyanna Patrudu has invited MLAs to participate in upcoming sports and cultural competitions, aiming to provide relief from the stress of political life. Taking to social media, he encouraged all legislators to join the events, emphasizing their importance in fostering camaraderie and relaxation among public representatives. The competitions are set to take place from March 18th to 20th, featuring various sports and cultural programs. Speaker Ayyanna Patrudu expressed confidence that these activities will serve as a much-needed break for MLAs who are

constantly engaged in public service. To ensure smooth execution, the Speaker held a preparatory meeting with Minister Mandipalli Ramprasad Reddy, other ministers, and MLAs to discuss arrangements for the event. He stated that the winners of the competitions will be honored in a prize distribution ceremony led by Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. The initiative has garnered a positive response, with many MLAs showing enthusiasm for the upcoming events.

Kakani Govardhana Reddy Counters Somireddy's Assembly Comments



TPN Correspondent | Nellore
Former MLA Kakani Govardhana Reddy strongly countered Sarvepalli MLA Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy's statements in the assembly. Addressing a press conference on Tuesday, Kakani accused Somireddy of misleading the house with false allegations. Kakani challenged Somireddy's claim that 18 illegal cases were filed

against him. "If Somireddy has the courage, let him read out the list of these 18 cases in the assembly. He is trying to mislead people with baseless accusations," he stated. He clarified that a case related to land encroachment was filed based on court orders and not due to political vendetta. Furthermore, Kakani alleged that Somireddy amassed crores of rupees through politics. He de-

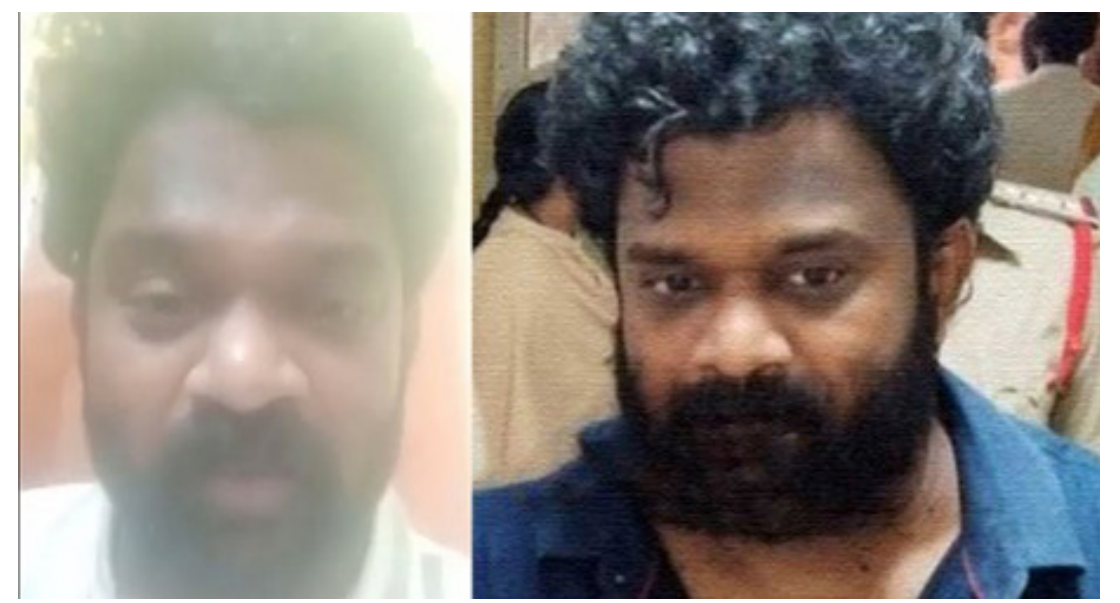
nied any irregularities in the Rustom Mine issue and stated that those who illegally looted gravel in the past were the ones who funded Somireddy during the last elections. Kakani also questioned how forgery allegations could be leveled against him when his own party was in power. "If we were involved in forgery, why would we allow a case to be filed during our tenure? It was Somireddy's son who allegedly forged an RDO's signature, and the case was conveniently suppressed," he alleged. Kakani's remarks have intensified the political debate in Nellore, with both leaders engaging in a war of words.

Borugadda Anil Fails to Surrender, Officials Inform AP High Court

- Interim bail period ended on Tuesday evening
- Jail officials confirm he did not surrender
- East Godavari SP alerted on the situation

TPN Correspondent | East Godavari Dist
YCP leader Borugadda Anil Kumar did not surrender to the jail authorities within the stipulated time, despite his interim bail ending on Tuesday evening. Officials from the Andhra Pradesh High Court were informed that Anil failed to comply with the surrender deadline.

In response, prison authorities alerted the East Godavari District SP, providing details of the sureties who facilitated his bail. This development has raised concerns over his whereabouts. Borugadda Anil had earlier sought interim bail citing his mother's illness, claiming he needed to be with her during her medical treatment. However, police investigations have revealed that he was not present with his mother during her surgery or discharge from the hospital. Authorities are now gathering information on his movements and activities during his bail period. With Anil failing to surrender, law enforcement agencies are expected to take further action in the coming days.



New School Uniforms Approved from Next Academic Year

**Uniforms to change from June 12th
Designed without political colors or symbols
Govt to provide uniforms, bags, and belts**



TPN Correspondent | Amaravati
The Andhra Pradesh government has approved new school uniforms, which will be implemented from the beginning of the next academic year on June 12. Announcing this in the Assembly, Minister Nara Lokesh stated that the uniforms have been designed with neutral colors, free from political symbols or party affiliations. Speaking in the Assembly, Nara Lokesh emphasized that education should remain free from political influence, and students should not be used as political symbols. He stated that the previous government had imposed uniforms with party colors, which was unfair to students. "We believe that students should feel comfortable and proud in their uniforms, without being linked to any political identity," he said. As part of the Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Student Kit, the government will provide free uniforms, school bags, and belts to students. Lokesh highlighted that the quality of uniforms will be improved, ensuring durability and comfort. He assured that the tender process for procurement would be transparent, ensuring timely delivery before the academic year begins. The new initiative is part of the government's broader plan to enhance school infrastructure, including better classrooms, digital learning facilities, and student welfare schemes. Lokesh also stated that feedback from students, teachers, and parents was considered in designing the

new uniforms. Opposition leaders questioned the necessity of changing uniforms, but Lokesh clarified that the previously imposed uniforms were politically motivated and needed to be replaced with a neutral and dignified design. With these changes, the government aims to create a positive and inclusive learning environment, ensuring that students focus on education without any external influence.



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Handri Niva Works Accelerated Under CM Naidu's Leadership – Minister Ramanaidu

- ₹3,243 crore allocated for Handri Niva in this year's budget
- Only ₹500 crore spent during the YSRCP regime from 2019-24
- Project to be completed by June 2025 as per CM's directive

TPN Correspondent | Amaravati

Minister Nimmala Ramanaidu criticized the previous YSRCP government for neglecting the Handri Niva project, stating that from 2019 to 2024, only ₹500 crore was spent on the project, whereas during the TDP government's tenure (2014-19), ₹5,000 crore had been allocated.

He pointed out that the previous government even failed to clear electricity bills, leaving the motors with a 3,850 cusec capacity—installed by Chandrababu Naidu—unused. In contrast, the current TDP-led government is working rapidly to ensure the completion of the project by June 2025, following CM Chandrababu Naidu's orders.

To achieve this, an unprecedented budget allocation of ₹3,243 crore has been made for Handri Niva this year, marking the highest-ever funding for the project. Minister Ramanaidu stated that Chandrababu Naidu is committed to diverting Krishna and Godavari waters to Rayalaseema, transforming it into a flourishing agricultural hub.



Fire Safety Inspection Conducted at Vijayawada Mango Market

TPN Correspondent | Vijayawada

On the instructions of Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner Dhyanchandra, fire safety inspections were conducted at the Mango Market on Tuesday morning. VMC fire personnel visited the market to assess whether traders had implemented the required fire safety measures in cold storage units.

Earlier, officials had directed traders to ensure proper fire-fighting equipment and preventive measures in their establishments. The inspection was conducted to verify compliance and enforce immediate action wherever necessary. District Fire Officer Malyadri, Regional Fire Officer Venkateswara Rao, and Station Fire Officer Raja participated in the inspection, ensuring that all fire safety protocols were followed to prevent potential hazards.



Jana Sena Leaders Launch 'Chalo Pithapuram' Poster in Kondapalli

TPN Correspondent | Ibrahimpatnam

A poster launch event for the Chalo Pithapuram Public Meeting was organized at Jana Sena Party (JSP) Mylavaram constituency in-charge Akkala Ramamohan Rao (Gandhi)'s residence in Kondapalli. The event saw the participation of JSP State Spokesperson and other key leaders.

Speaking on the occasion, Akkala Ramamohan Rao stated that the Jana Sena Party's 12th formation day celebrations would be held in Pithapuram, emphasizing the party's decade-long fight on public issues and its role in forming the NDA alliance government. He pointed out that nine months have passed since the government took charge, with a strong focus on development and public welfare.

He assured that the public meeting will be conducted with well-planned arrangements, including separate galleries for women, farmers, artisans, and youth. Security, food, and facilities for attendees traveling long distances are also being prioritized. He confirmed that Deputy CM Pawan Kaly-



an and Minister Nadendla Manohar were personally overseeing the arrangements. Polavaram project works progressing; ₹39,000 crore tenders issued Centre approved a 170 km Amaravati Outer Ring Road New barrage and bridge construction planned near Amaravati Vijayawada Outer Ring Road project advancing Three free LPG cylinders per year scheme implementation ₹20,000 annual support for farmers included in budget Amma Vodi scheme set for relaunch in May Addressing political matters, Ramamohan

Rao confirmed that TDP leader Varma will be given an MLC seat, with more appointments expected soon. He criticized the previous government for closing 300 industries in Kondapalli, stating that the NDA government is working on reviving industries and providing subsidies. Minister Nadendla Manohar reaffirmed that Jana Sena played a crucial role in forming the NDA government and stated that the alliance would remain strong for the next 15 years. He clarified that leadership decisions would be made collectively within the coalition. The event also addressed Dr. NTTPS plant-related grievances, with leaders assuring solutions to public concerns.

Awareness Seminar on Scheduled Drugs Organized by Vijayawada Police

- Police Commissioner educates medical shop owners on drug laws
- Strict action warned against violations of NDPS and Drugs & Cosmetics Acts
- Online medical sales heads and pharmacy associations participate

TPN Correspondent | Vijayawada

Vijayawada City Police Commissioner S. V. Rajasekhara Babu, IPS conducted an awareness seminar on Scheduled Drugs regulations under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, and the NDPS Act, 1985, at the N.T.R. District Police Commissioner's Office on Tuesday. Representatives from various online medical sales platforms and medical shop associations participated in the session.

Speaking at the seminar, Commissioner Rajasekhara Babu emphasized the importance of strict compliance with drug laws to prevent the misuse of Scheduled Drugs. He explained that drugs listed under the NDPS Act are labeled with a red NRX mark, and their sale must be strictly monitored. He urged medical



shop owners to maintain proper records, verify authentic prescriptions, and report suspicious purchases to authorities. Participants were made aware that violations such as selling drugs without prescriptions or to ineligible persons would result in strict legal action. The Commissioner stressed that every medical shop manager must uphold these responsibilities as a social duty. The session was attended by SB & Anti-Narcotics ACP S. Kiran Kumar, Drugs Control Admin-

istration Assistant Director Anil Kumar, Narcotic Cell Inspector Ravi Kumar, Eagle Team SI Veeranjanyulu, Medical Shops Association President Sai, and state-level managers from Apollo, MedPlus, and other medical institutions.

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Awareness Seminar on MSME Loans for Nayi Brahmins at MP Kesineni Shivnath's Office

TPN Correspondent | Vijayawada

On the orders of MP Kesineni Shivnath (Chinni), an awareness seminar on MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) loans under the Prime Minister Employment Generation Program (PMGEP) and BC Corporation loans was held at his office on Tuesday. The event was organized under the auspices of Vijayawada West Constituency Nayi Brahmin Association President Naviri Mahesh.

Presiding over the seminar, TDP senior leader Narasimha Chowdhury emphasized the importance of supporting small and medium-scale industries. NTR District MSME Program Coordinator Dr. Sanke Viswanadham and former Corporator Kakumallikharjuna Yadav explained the details of the loan schemes available.

They highlighted that women entrepreneurs can receive up to 45% subsidy on MSME loans obtained through the PMGEP scheme. Loans are available in two categories:

1. Service Sector – Loans between ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh, with no educational qualification required.
2. Manufacturing Sector – Loans between ₹1 lakh to ₹50 lakh, requiring a minimum 8th-grade pass. Additionally, BC Corporation loans ranging from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh are available with a 50% subsidy.

MP Kesineni Shivnath (Chinni) assured that free assistance is provided at his office for loan applications, DPR preparation, and coordination with banks. He urged people to take advantage of these schemes and become successful entrepreneurs.

The program was attended by TDP SC Cell State Authority Representative Parishapogu Rajesh (Dalit Ratna), TDP leaders K. Jagan Mohan Rao, Lingampalli Mohan Rao, and others.

Tension at Bhimavaram TTD Deaf School



- Teachers and students accuse the principal of harassment
- Complaints of mental agony and fear among staff and children
- Officials visit school, inquiry initiated

TPN G. Srinivas | Bhimavaram

Tension has escalated at Sri Venkateswara Deaf School in Bhimavaram, operated by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), as teachers and students have raised serious allegations of harassment and mistreatment against Principal P. Padmanabharaju. The school, known for its four-decade-long service to the hearing-impaired, has been a beacon of care and discipline. However, for the past seven months, students, teachers, and staff have been living in fear and distress, alleging that the principal's actions have created a hostile environment. The teachers and hostel staff claim that students are denied proper meals, trees bearing mangoes and guavas were cut down to prevent children from eating fruits, and mental harassment is rampant. They also allege that the principal frequently arrives at the school at odd hours, subjects female staff to verbal abuse, and discourages students from performing well in exams. On Monday, the teachers and staff publicly denounced the

principal, addressing the media with tears and pleas for intervention. They stated that complaints against him had been made even when he worked as a technician before his promotion to principal in September 2024.

Principal's Response: Principal Padmanabharaju denied all allegations, claiming they were baseless and that parents were instigated against him. However, he later apologized in writing, admitting to mistakes due to mental stress. In his letter, he stated that he would go on medical leave, apply for voluntary retirement, and promised not to trouble anyone further.

Officials' Inquiry: On Tuesday, Deputy Inspector of Schools Srinivas and MEOs Venkateswara Rao and Srinivas visited the school, spoke to the staff, and recorded statements. They confirmed that an official departmental inquiry would be conducted, with reports sent to higher authorities. The incident has raised serious concerns, and authorities are expected to take necessary action soon.

MLA Giddi Satyanarayana Calls for Massive Turnout at Jana Sena Formation Day

TPN Correspondent | P. Gannavaram

P. Gannavaram MLA Giddi Satyanarayana has urged Jana Sena Party soldiers and women activists from the constituency to actively participate in the party's 12th Formation Day celebrations on March 14 at Chitrada, Pithapuram constituency. Speaking as the chief guest at a Mandal-level preparatory meeting at Kapu Samajika Bhavan, Korlapatipalem, the MLA emphasized Jana Sena's 11-year journey of public service over positions and its role in bringing the NDA alliance to power in the

last elections.

He called upon party members from four mandals to gather at the Jana Sena office in P. Gannavaram at 8 AM on March 14. The party flag will be hoisted there before departing for Chitrada.

Several leaders and activists, including Water Distributory Committee Vice Chairman Akkisetty Prasad, Sirigineedi Venkateswara Rao, Vasamsetty Kumar, Maipala Tataji, Korlapati Gopi, Pithani Ramakrishna, Vakapalli Dorababu, Chitikenani Nani, Arigela Suribabu, Chintapalli Sriram Prasad, and others participated in the meeting.



Efforts to Strengthen Marine Infrastructure in Srikakulam



TPN Correspondent | Srikakulam

To address the long-standing challenges faced by the fishing community in Srikakulam, a delegation met Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal, seeking marine infrastructure development in the district.

- Appeal for fishing harbor and jetties in key coastal areas
- Request to Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal for development support
- Aim to reduce migration and boost local livelihoods

Despite having a 150 km coastline, the lack of proper facilities has forced many fishermen to migrate to Gujarat, Kerala, and Karnataka for livelihood. To curb this migration and strengthen the coastal economy, a request was made for the construction of a fishing harbor at Bhavanapadu in Santhabommali Mandal, along with fishing jetties at Manchineellupeta

(Vajrapukotturu Mandal) and Kalingapatnam (Gara Mandal).

These projects will create local employment opportunities, support sustainable fishing practices, and improve the economic well-being of coastal communities. The delegation emphasized the urgent need for these facilities to enhance the livelihoods of thousands of fishermen.

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal responded positively, acknowledging the importance of the proposal. Efforts will be made to ensure necessary approvals and funding for these initiatives.

With a commitment to developing essential infrastructure, the leaders expressed optimism that the central government would take the necessary steps to boost the fishing sector in Srikakulam.

Senior IAS Officers Appointed as District In-charges for Development

- Special Chief Secretaries appointed as zonal in-charges
- IAS officers to oversee district administration and key programs
- Regular reviews, village visits, and public grievance redressal mandated

TPN Correspondent | Eluru

To accelerate development and ensure the effective implementation of government priority programs, the state government has appointed senior IAS officers as district in-charges and special chief secretary-level officers as zonal in-charges. This initiative aims to strengthen coordination among departments and enhance public service delivery.

According to the latest government orders, Ajay Jain, Special Chief Secretary, Housing, has been designated as the Zonal In-charge for West Godavari, Eluru, Konaseema, Kakinada, and East Godavari districts. K. Amrapali, MD of AP Tourism Development Corporation, has been appointed as the District In-charge for Eluru, while A. Suryakumari, Secretary, Women and Child Welfare, will oversee West Godavari district.

The District In-charges have been directed to actively participate in governance, assist district collectors, and con-



duct biweekly reviews with officials. They must visit villages regularly, stay overnight at least twice a month, and ensure timely resolution of public grievances. A monthly progress report is to be submitted to the Zonal In-charge and Chief Secretary.

Zonal In-charges will provide strategic guidance, conduct monthly reviews, and visit villages once a month, staying overnight to assess ground-level implementation. This move is expected to enhance governance efficiency and accelerate district-level development programs across the state.

ECI Invites Political Parties for Discussion on Electoral Process



TPN Correspondent | Nellore

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has invited national and state political parties to submit suggestions on unresolved election-related issues by April 30, 2025. It has also invited party presidents and senior leaders for discussions to further strengthen the election process, said Collector and District Election Officer O. Anand.

In a letter sent to political parties on Tuesday, the ECI stated that meetings will be held at mutually convenient times to address concerns in a legal

and transparent manner.

During an ECI meeting last week, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar instructed CEOs, DEOs, and EROs across all States and Union Territories to conduct regular meetings with political parties. The Commission has directed officials to address party suggestions within the legal framework and submit an Action Taken Report by March 31, 2025.

The ECI letter emphasized that political parties are key stakeholders in India's electoral system and cited major laws, including the Representation of the People Act (1950 & 1951), Voter Registration Rules (1960), and Election Rules (1961). It reaffirmed the ECI's commitment to conducting elections in a lawful and transparent manner.

ECI Director Anuj Chandak confirmed the initiative through a press release, urging political parties to actively participate in the discussions.

MP Purandeswari Demands Coconut Board Office in East Godavari



TPN Correspondent | Rajahmundry

State BJP President and Rajahmundry MP Daggubati Purandeswari has urged the Central Government to establish a special Coconut Development Board office in East Godavari, considering the needs of coconut farmers. Raising the issue in the Lok Sabha under Rule 377, she emphasized the importance of the board in supporting farmers with technical guidance, pest control, and financial assistance. India ranks third globally in coconut production, with

Andhra Pradesh holding the fourth position in the country. The state has 1.23 lakh hectares of coconut plantations, primarily in Krishna, East Godavari, and West Godavari districts. MP Purandeswari highlighted that while Kerala has reached saturation in coconut production, Andhra Pradesh still has vast potential due to its fertile soil and favorable climatic conditions.

She pointed out that the Coconut Development Board, established in 1981, is headquartered in Kerala, and its regional offices are too far for Andhra farmers to access timely support. Given the recent surge in whitefly infestation, bud rot, and other plant diseases, she stressed the urgency of a dedicated office in East Godavari to assist farmers.

The MP stated that the proposed office would enhance productivity, safeguard livelihoods, boost exports, and maximize the state's agricultural potential.

Swachhandra - Swarnandhra: Collective Efforts for a Clean Parvathipuram



TPN Narasimhulu | Parvathipuram Manyam

District Collector A. Shyam Prasad has called for collective participation in making Parvathipuram a clean and beautiful city. Addressing officials in a review meeting on Tuesday, he emphasized that every citizen must take responsibility for cleanliness under the Swachhandra - Swarnandhra initiative.

As part of this program, a Swachhandra Parvathipuram rally will be organized on Wednesday morning, starting from the Collectorate to the RCM, carrying placards to raise awareness on sanitation. The Collector instructed officials to coordinate with public representatives, volun-

teers, and organizations to ensure maximum participation. A pledge for cleanliness will be taken during the meeting at RCM, reinforcing the commitment to a clean and green Parvathipuram. The Collector directed officials to arrange sanitation, drinking water, banners, seating, and other necessary facilities for the event.

Officials including District Panchayat Officer T. Kondala Rao, DWAMA PD K. Ramachandra Rao, Municipal Commissioner Ch. Venkateswarlu, and others participated in the meeting. The initiative aims to instill a sense of responsibility among citizens and encourage sustained efforts for a cleaner environment.



China's Expanding Surveillance on India

A Cause for Concern?

In recent diplomatic engagements, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi emphasized that India and China should "support each other rather than undermine each other," advocating for cooperation over suspicion. On the surface, these remarks suggest an improvement in bilateral relations, particularly since October 2024, when talks resumed after a four-year deadlock following the Galwan clashes. Discussions on border patrolling and disengagement have restarted, and Beijing continues to insist that the border dispute should not define the entirety of India-China relations. However, behind these diplomatic niceties, China's surveillance and monitoring activities along India's borders tell a different story.

China's Expanding Influence in South Asia

China's growing strategic footprint in South Asia has been evident for years, largely through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013. Using economic leverage, Beijing has established a strong presence across multiple countries, often leaving them in heavy debt. Sri Lanka and the Maldives are two prime examples of how China's economic influence has led to significant security concerns for India.

Sri Lanka and the Maldives: Beijing's Strategic Docking Points

One of the earliest signs of China's strategic expansion came in 2017 when Sri Lanka was forced to lease the Hambantota Port to China for 99 years after failing to repay its debts. This move immediately raised security alarms in New Delhi, as the port's location holds significant geostrategic importance. In addition to economic control, China has used Sri Lanka as a docking station for its surveillance ships under the pretext of research, allowing it to monitor naval movements in the Indian Ocean. A similar challenge has emerged in the Maldives. Since President Mohamed Muizzu assumed office, Male's growing tilt towards Beijing has been a growing concern for India. Chinese research vessels, including the advanced Xiang Yang Hong 03, have docked in the Maldives, sparking fears that these ships are collecting critical maritime data. Further talks between China and the Maldives about installing Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs) in the Indian Ocean only add to India's security concerns. To counter these developments, India



is strengthening its maritime capabilities. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Mauritius on March 11-12 is expected to finalize agreements that will enhance India's ability to monitor Chinese activities in the region. Additionally, India has ramped up its defense presence by establishing INS Jatayu in Lakshadweep's Minicoy island, a strategic naval base aimed at countering China's growing influence in the Indian Ocean.

Surveillance from the Skies and Across Borders

China's surveillance is not limited to maritime activities. Reports indicate that Beijing has recently deployed a Large Phased Array Radar (LPAR) in Yunnan province, close to Myanmar. With a staggering range of 5,000 kilometers, this radar gives China the capability to monitor significant portions of Indian territory, including critical military movements and missile launches. One of the key threats posed by this development is its ability to detect missile tests from Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast—India's primary launch site for nuclear-capable missiles like Agni V and K4 submarine-launched ballistic missiles. This level of surveillance significantly compromises India's strategic preparedness. To address this, New Delhi is reportedly in discussions with Russia to acquire the Voronezh early-warning radar system, which has an extended range of 8,000 kilometers and would provide India with a much-needed technological edge.

China's Sophisticated Space Reconnaissance

Beyond ground-based surveillance, China has developed an advanced space-based reconnaissance system. Since

2006, Beijing has launched over 140 Yaogan satellites, which specialize in remote sensing and surveillance. Combined with other satellite programs like Gaofen and Shiyang, China now possesses the capability to track even small objects in the Indian Ocean and beyond. This vast surveillance network places India at a significant disadvantage. Beijing reportedly operates 245 operational reconnaissance satellites, compared to India's modest fleet of 26. The superior range, resolution, and all-weather capability of Chinese satellites give them a major edge in intelligence gathering and military monitoring.

Can India Trust China's Calls for Normalization?

Despite Beijing's diplomatic overtures, India has ample reasons to remain cautious. China's defense budget for 2025 stands at a staggering \$246 billion, more than three times India's allocation of \$82 billion. While China continues to advocate for better trade ties and people-to-people exchanges, it is simultaneously expanding its surveillance, military, and intelligence-gathering capabilities along India's borders. New Delhi has been consistent in its approach—stating that diplomatic progress must be linked to resolving border tensions. However, China's relentless pursuit of strategic advantages suggests that trust and mutual respect remain elusive goals. As Beijing strengthens its security infrastructure across land, sea, and space, India must remain vigilant and take decisive steps to counterbalance China's growing surveillance network.

The question that remains is: Can India-China relations ever be built on genuine trust, or will security concerns continue to dictate their trajectory?



X Outage: A Cyber Attack or a Convenient Narrative?

THE POINT DESK

The recent cyber attack on X, formerly known as Twitter, has raised serious concerns about digital security, political narratives, and the implications of corporate leadership intertwining with governance. While U.S. officials are still investigating the nature and origin of the attack, Elon Musk's swift assertion that the attackers had "IP addresses originating in the Ukraine area" has fueled speculation, controversy, and political posturing.

The Attack and the Unanswered Questions

On Monday, thousands of X users reported difficulties accessing the platform. While outages are not uncommon in the digital world, this particular incident was quickly labeled a cyber attack by U.S. officials, triggering an immediate investigation. However, as of now, the authorities have not determined the perpetrators or their motives.

Musk's claim that Ukrainian IP addresses were involved has only added to the confusion. Cybersecurity experts were quick to point out that an IP address does not confirm the geographical origin of an attack. Hackers routinely use VPNs and compromised servers worldwide, making it difficult to trace the actual source. Musk's choice to highlight Ukraine, without presenting concrete evidence, raises questions about whether this was a genuine concern or an attempt to shape a particular narrative.

Musk's Political Entanglement

Musk's influence in both business and politics has grown significantly, particularly under Donald Trump's administration. His role in the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), an agency created by Trump to downsize federal bureaucracy, has placed him in a powerful but controversial position. His ownership of X, Tesla, and SpaceX, combined with his direct advisory role to Trump, creates an unprecedented intersection of corporate power and governance. It is also worth noting that Musk's political leanings have alienated a significant portion of Tesla's consumer base. Traditionally, Tesla has appealed to environmentally conscious consumers, many of whom lean left politically. However, Musk's increasingly vocal support for right-wing policies and aggressive government downsizing has led to protests and even acts of vandalism against Tesla. On Monday, as X suffered its outage, Tesla's stock took a 15% hit, its largest one-day drop since September 2020. This raises an important question: Is Musk's alignment with Trump costing him his customer base?

Trump's Support and the Narrative Shift

Trump, never one to miss an opportunity for political theater, quickly took to his own social media platform to defend Musk. Announcing his decision to purchase a Tesla, he framed it as an act of solidarity against what he perceives as unjust backlash. "Why should he be punished for putting his tremendous skills to work in order to help MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN???" Trump posted, further tying Musk's struggles to the larger MAGA agenda. This incident highlights how cybersecurity threats are increasingly politicized. The rush to blame Ukraine without conclusive evidence plays into broader geopolitical tensions, particularly given Musk's past controversial comments about Ukraine and Russia's war. Meanwhile, his continued political entanglements are not just shaping his public image but also affecting the businesses he leads. The X outage may have been a cyber attack, but the bigger story is how narratives surrounding it are being crafted to serve political and corporate interests.

India's Air Pollution Crisis: The Stark Reality of 2024 Rankings

THE POINT DESK

The latest 'World Air Quality Report 2024' by Swiss firm IQAir has once again put India's pollution crisis in the spotlight. A staggering 13 out of the world's 20 most polluted cities are in India, with Byrnihat, a town on the Assam-Meghalaya border, ranking as the most polluted. Surprisingly, Delhi, Mumbai, and Pune were not at the top, though the capital still retained the title of the world's most polluted capital city.

Byrnihat's Alarming Air Quality

Byrnihat's pollution crisis is a direct consequence of unchecked industrial expansion and heavy vehicular emissions. Its PM2.5 levels reached a hazardous 128 micrograms per cubic meter, making it the worst in the world. The presence of iron and steel plants, distilleries, and a constant movement of trucks between Assam and Meghalaya contribute significantly to its deteriorating air quality.

Despite public protests in January against worsening pollution, authorities have only recently taken action, shutting down seven industrial units in Byrnihat for environmental violations. However, this is merely a band-aid solution to a problem that demands long-term sustainable measures.

Delhi's Unyielding Pollution Problem

Delhi remains the world's most polluted capital, with its PM2.5 levels rising from 102.4 micrograms per cubic meter in 2023 to 108.3 in 2024. The national capital battles year-round pollution exacerbated by vehicular emissions, industrial smoke, stubble burning, and firecracker use. The winter months worsen the crisis due to stagnant air trapping pollutants.

Efforts to control pollution, such as the implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) and vehicular restrictions, have had limited impact. Without stricter enforcement of policies and a shift towards greener



energy alternatives, Delhi's pollution crisis will persist.

India's Broader Pollution Problem

India's pollution crisis extends far beyond Byrnihat and Delhi. Cities such as Mullanpur, Faridabad, Gurugram, Ganganagar, Noida, and Muzaffarnagar have dangerously high pollution levels. The country's overall PM2.5 levels saw a slight 7% improvement from 2023, with India dropping from the third to the fifth most polluted nation. However, this progress is minimal, as over 35% of Indian cities still report air

pollution levels exceeding WHO's safety limits by more than tenfold.

The issue is not confined to India alone. Four cities in Pakistan and one in China also ranked among the world's top 20 most polluted cities. However, India's vast industrial and population growth, coupled with weak enforcement of pollution control measures, has made its air quality crisis particularly severe.

A Call for Action

The dangers of PM2.5 pollution cannot be ignored. These microscopic particles infiltrate the lungs and blood-

stream, leading to severe respiratory diseases, heart conditions, and even cancer. With industrial emissions, vehicle exhaust, and agricultural burning being primary sources, India needs urgent intervention.

Tackling air pollution requires a multi-pronged approach: enforcing stricter industrial regulations, promoting public transportation, transitioning to cleaner energy, and holding local authorities accountable. The government must act decisively, not just for the sake of rankings but for the health and well-being of millions of Indians.

PM Modi gets 'Order of the Star and Key of Indian Ocean' from Mauritius PM

PM Modi Becomes 1st Indian To Get Mauritius' Highest Honour



TPN Correspondent | Mauritius

Mauritius.

Mauritian Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam announced on Tuesday that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be conferred with the prestigious "Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean," the highest honor of Mauritius. This makes PM Modi the first Indian to receive this distinguished award, recognizing his significant contributions to enhancing bilateral relations between India and

The honor highlights PM Modi's efforts in fostering stronger ties between the two nations, particularly in areas such as trade, culture, and people-to-people connections. The award also emphasizes his leadership in promoting regional cooperation and strategic partnerships in the Indian Ocean region.

This recognition marks the 21st international award that PM Modi has

received from a foreign country, underscoring his global stature and the positive impact of his foreign policy. Ramgoolam also mentioned that PM Modi is only the fifth foreign national to be honored with this award, further highlighting the exceptional nature of this recognition.

The Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean is a prestigious award given to foreign dignitaries who have made remarkable contributions to strengthening Mauritius' relationship with other nations. This honor not only celebrates PM Modi's leadership but also serves as a testament to the long-standing friendship between India and Mauritius.

The announcement of this award further solidifies the strong diplomatic ties between the two countries, built on shared values and cooperation in various sectors. PM Modi's recognition will undoubtedly strengthen India's relations with Mauritius and inspire continued collaboration in the years to come.

Treated like cows, drunkards ruined Iftar: Police complaint against actor Vijay's Ramzan event



TPN Correspondent | Tamil Nadu

A police complaint has been lodged against Tamil film star Thalapathy Vijay following his Iftar event during Ramzan. The Tamil Nadu Sunnat Jamath, a Muslim organization, accused the event's organizers of allowing "drunkards and rowdies" to participate, which they claim insulted the Muslim community. The group also alleged that attendees were treated disrespectfully, likening their treatment to that of "cows."

Syed Kous, the treasurer of Tamil Nadu Sunnat Jamath, voiced his grievances, stating, "Muslims were insulted at the Iftar program organized by Vijay. We believe the presence of individuals with no connection to fasting or Iftar, such as drunkards and rowdies, dishonored the community." He further criticized the presence of "foreign guards," alleging that they disrespected attendees, further fueling the group's anger.

The complaint emphasized that the action taken was not for publicity, but to prevent such incidents in the future.

Kous insisted that legal action should be pursued against Vijay to ensure such behavior does not repeat.

Thalapathy Vijay, who is also the founder of Tamilaga Vetri Kazhagam (TVK), hosted the Iftar event in Chennai on March 7, 2025. During the event, he expressed his gratitude toward the Muslim community for participating and hailed the values of brotherhood and humanism. Dressed in a white shirt, dhoti, and a skullcap, Vijay joined in the prayers with the attendees and broke his fast.

Following the Iftar, the actor-politician appeared from the sunroof of his campaign van and waved at his supporters who had gathered along the streets and on a flyover. A video of the actor praying and breaking his fast quickly went viral on social media. While some praised his display of secularism, others criticized it as mere "appeasement."

As the controversy continues to unfold, both the actor's supporters and critics await further developments.

Monitoring Situation In Afghanistan, Held Discussions With Taliban: India At UN

TPN Correspondent | United Nations

India has expressed its ongoing engagement with Afghanistan's Taliban regime, focusing on humanitarian aid and potential development projects. During a recent UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan, India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, highlighted the significance of India's historical and special people-to-people ties with Afghanistan as the foundation for its current engagement.

In January, Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri met Afghanistan's Acting Foreign Minister Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi in Dubai, marking the highest-level contact between India and the Taliban since the latter's takeover of Kabul in 2021. The two sides discussed various bilateral matters, including regional developments and the continuation of India's humanitarian support for the Afghan people. The Afghan side expressed appreciation for India's assistance, particularly in terms of providing ongoing aid.

Harish noted that India remains committed to monitoring Afghanistan's situation closely while working with international partners to ensure stability. India's approach involves providing humanitarian assistance, with an emphasis on health, food security, education, and capacity-building. India has also contributed 27 tonnes of relief material, 50,000 tonnes of wheat, and over 300 tonnes of medical supplies since the Taliban's rise to power.

India has a long-standing partnership with Afghanistan,

including more than 500 projects across the country since 2001. It has also partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to support Afghan drug users, particularly women, by providing hygiene kits, food, and medical supplies.

The Afghan authorities, meanwhile, have expressed an interest in further cooperation, including the strengthening of cricket ties, which are highly valued by the youth in Afghanistan. Additionally, the use of the Chabahar port for trade, including humanitarian aid, was discussed as part of the bilateral talks.

India remains committed to working with all stakeholders to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in Afghanistan while continuing to support the Afghan people's welfare.



India Becomes the Second-Largest Arms Importer After Ukraine

Global Arms Transfers Remain Stable, India Shifts Focus from Russian Arms

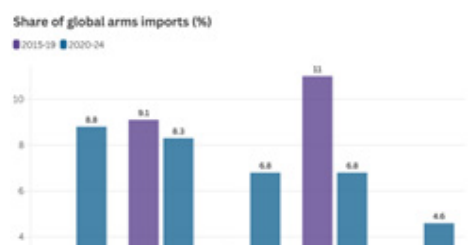
TPN Correspondent | NEW DELHI

India has diversified its arms imports in recent years, with a notable pivot away from Russian military hardware. According to the latest Economic Survey, France has emerged as a key supplier to India, securing major deals including 36 Rafale fighter jets and six Scorpene-class conventional submarines. Additional contracts for 26 Rafale-M jets and three submarines are expected to be finalized soon. France was the second-largest exporter of major arms to India, after the United States.

While the overall volume of global arms transfers remained stable between 2015-19 and 2020-24, it was 18% higher than the 2005-2009 period. Imports in Europe and the Americas increased, offsetting declines in other regions. Italy saw significant progress, jumping from 10th to 6th

place in the arms exporter list, holding a 4.8% share of global sales.

The report also highlighted the global shift in arms imports, with at least 35 countries sending weapons to Ukraine since the war began in 2022. Ukraine received 8.8% of global arms imports in 2020-24, with the United States accounting for 45% of the total arms supplied, followed by Germany (12%) and Poland (11%).



European countries have significantly increased arms imports as part of their rearmament efforts, spurred

by the ongoing conflict with Russia. Despite these increases, some major arms importers, including Saudi Arabia, India, and China, experienced substantial declines in



import volumes. Mathew George, a programme director at SIPRI, noted that the figures reflect the shifting security dynamics, with countries like India looking to reduce their dependence on Russian arms due to changing geopolitical and strategic priorities.

Airtel Partners with SpaceX to Bring Starlink Satellite Internet to India



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Airtel has signed a partnership agreement with SpaceX to introduce Starlink's satellite internet services in India, pending approval from authorities. This collaboration aims to enhance internet access across the country, particularly in remote and rural areas.

The agreement outlines several areas of collaboration. Airtel may sell Starlink equipment through its stores and offer the service to businesses. The two companies also plan to use Starlink to connect rural schools, health centers, and other remote locations, ensuring high-speed internet access where traditional

networks are limited. Additionally, Airtel and SpaceX will explore ways Starlink can support Airtel's network infrastructure, and how Airtel's existing infrastructure can help SpaceX expand its footprint in India.

Airtel already partners with Eutelsat OneWeb for satellite internet, but the inclusion of Starlink is expected to further boost the company's coverage in underserved regions. This will provide businesses and communities in remote locations with better connectivity options, improving access to high-speed broadband.

Gopal Vittal, Managing Director and Vice Chairman of Bharti Airtel, expressed enthusiasm

about the partnership, calling it a significant milestone for the company. He stated, "Working with SpaceX to offer Starlink to Airtel customers in India is a major step in advancing satellite connectivity. This collaboration will help bring world-class, high-speed broadband to even the most remote parts of the country, ensuring reliable internet for individuals, businesses, and communities."

Gwynne Shotwell, President of SpaceX, shared her excitement about the collaboration, highlighting the potential of Starlink to transform lives in India. "We are thrilled to work with Airtel and unlock the transformative impact Starlink can bring to the people of India," Shotwell said. "The Airtel team has played a pivotal role in India's telecom development, making this collaboration a natural fit."

With this partnership, Airtel and SpaceX are set to bring significant improvements in internet connectivity across India, especially in areas that have previously faced challenges accessing reliable broadband services.

US-Ukraine Peace Talks Begin



TPN Correspondent | Washington

US and Ukrainian officials have initiated peace talks in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah, with discussions led by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Andriy Yermak, Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine. The talks are taking place after Ukraine launched its largest drone attack on Moscow, marking a significant escalation in the ongoing war.

Yermak shared on social media that the meeting with the US delegation had begun positively, describing the discussions as "constructive" and reaffirming Ukraine's readiness to work towards peace. "We are ready to do everything to achieve peace," Yermak stated, emphasizing Ukraine's commitment to negotiating an end to the conflict

with Russia.

This meeting follows a strained encounter between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during their previous White House meeting. Tensions flared when Trump criticized Zelenskyy for not being sufficiently grateful for US military aid, while US Vice President JD Vance also reprimanded the Ukrainian leader, calling him "disrespectful." The meeting's fallout had soured relations between the two countries, prompting Zelenskyy to seek a fresh approach in Jeddah.

In the backdrop of the peace talks, Ukraine launched an unprecedented drone strike on Moscow, deploying 91 drones overnight. The attack killed at least one person, led to air-

- Amid Rising Tensions Following Kyiv's Largest Drone Attack on Moscow
- US Secretary of State Marco and Ukrainian official Andriy lead negotiations
- future US aid and ceasefire terms under discussion

port closures, and caused significant flight diversions, adding pressure to the negotiations.

Secretary of State Rubio acknowledged the importance of understanding Ukraine's position in the talks, noting that both sides would need to make concessions for a ceasefire and an eventual end to the war. A central topic of discussion will be the US's continued support and military aid to Ukraine, particularly in light of Trump's previous comments and the evolving dynamics of international relations.

The outcome of these peace talks is seen as crucial in shaping the future of US-Ukraine relations and the ongoing conflict with Russia.



India Says "No Commitments" To Tariff Cuts After Trump's Tax Cut Claim

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

India has refuted claims made by President Donald Trump that it had agreed to significantly reduce tariffs on U.S. products, stating that no such commitment had been made. This clarification comes after Trump's recent remarks about India slashing import duties, which he framed as a positive development in the ongoing trade discussions between the two countries.

In his speech last week, Trump expressed frustration with India's "massive tariffs," calling them "almost restrictive" and accusing the country of unfair trade practices. He claimed that India had agreed to "cut their tariffs way down" in response to global pressure. However, India's government quickly denied these claims, telling a parliamentary panel that no formal commitment had been made to reduce tariffs. Instead, India has requested more time to address the issue, with a deadline set for September.

India's Commerce Secretary, Sunil Barthwal, emphasized that both countries were working towards a mutually beneficial bilateral trade agreement that would prioritize long-term cooperation rather than focusing solely on immediate tariff cuts. This statement signals India's intent to approach the issue carefully, considering its broader trade relationship with the U.S.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has cultivated a strong personal rapport with President Trump, has also voiced hopes for a trade agreement that would benefit both nations. Following his visit to the White House last month, Modi reiterated that the two countries would soon seal a deal aimed at fostering deeper economic ties.

While the U.S. is a critical market for India's information technology and services sectors, India has also become a significant customer of U.S. military hardware in recent years. This diverse trade relationship could influence the negotiations, as both sides seek to expand their economic and strategic cooperation.

Amidst these discussions, Trump may visit India later this year for a summit involving the Quad nations—Australia, India, Japan, and the United States—which could further shape the future of U.S.-India trade relations.



US Intel Chief Tulsi Gabbard To Visit India During Multi-Nation Trip To Indo-Pacific

TPN Correspondent | Washington

US Director of National Intelligence (DNI) Tulsi Gabbard announced on Monday that she has begun a multi-nation trip to the Indo-Pacific region, which will include visits to Japan, Thailand, and India. Gabbard highlighted the importance of fostering strong relationships, mutual understanding, and open communication to further the objectives of peace, freedom, and prosperity set by US President Donald Trump.

In a post on X, Gabbard shared her excitement for the trip, stating, "I am #WheelsUp on a multi-nation trip to the Indo-Pacific, a region I know very well having grown up as a child of the Pacific. I'll be going to Japan, Thailand, and India, with a brief stop in France enroute back to DC. Building strong relationships, understanding, and open lines of communication are vital to achieving President Trump's objectives of peace, freedom, and prosperity. First stop: Honolulu where I'll visit IC partners and INDPACOM leaders, and our troops engaging in training."

This marks the first visit by a senior White House official to India under the Trump administration. Gabbard's visit comes shortly after Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to the United States in February, where he met with Gabbard and praised her as a "strong votary" of the India-US relationship. Gabbard expressed her honor in welcoming PM Modi and reiterated her commitment to strengthening the friendship between the two nations.

Zelenskyy Meets Saudi Crown Prince To Discuss Peace Efforts and Strengthen Bilateral Ties



TPN Correspondent | Ottawa

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during his visit to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where they discussed the pursuit

of a "sustainable, fair, and comprehensive" peace in Ukraine, as per a joint statement released by the Saudi state news agency (SPA) on Tuesday.

The meeting, part of ongoing diplomatic

talks, aims to explore ways to end the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Zelenskyy, along with U.S. officials including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, arrived in Saudi Arabia on Monday for crucial discussions with both Ukrainian and U.S. officials, focused on finding a path towards peace.

In addition to peace efforts, the two leaders also talked about strengthening bilateral relations, particularly in key sectors such as energy, food industries, and infrastructure. They expressed interest in expanding cooperation in areas like oil, gas, and petrochemicals.

The talks highlight the growing partnership between Saudi Arabia and Ukraine, as both nations aim to enhance their investment relations and explore opportunities for mutual growth in these crucial industries.

Saudi Arabia's Mega-City Faces Mega Problem: The Price Of A Desert Paradise



TPN Correspondent | Saudi

Saudi Arabia's \$500 billion Neom mega-city project, intended to revolutionize urban living, is encountering significant hurdles. Despite an extravagant event to showcase the city's future vision, reports reveal substantial delays, budget overruns, and leadership issues.

The first phase of the project, Sindalah, has been plagued by problems. Originally slated to cost \$1.3 billion, the luxury resort's price tag has surged to nearly \$4 billion, years behind schedule. Notably, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the project's mastermind, was absent from the event, and weeks later, Neom's CEO, Nadhmi al-Nasr, was replaced, signaling deeper issues within the project.

Since its inception in 2017, Neom has already consumed over \$50 billion, but its most ambitious concepts, such as a floating business district, a desert ski resort, and a 170-kilometre-long linear city, remain unrealized. A Wall Street Journal report uncovered widespread financial mismanagement within Neom's leadership, revealing that executives, with the help of consultants McKinsey & Co., inflated financial projections to justify escalating costs. An internal audit found evidence of "deliberate manipulation" of figures by senior management.

The project's future appears daunting, with a draft 2023 board presentation estimating that completing Neom by 2080 would require \$8.8 trillion, more than 25 times Saudi Ara-

bia's annual budget. Even the first phase, which is expected to run until 2035, is projected to cost \$370 billion.

Neom's centerpiece, The Line, was envisioned as a futuristic city within two parallel skyscrapers stretching 170 kilometres. However, the scope of the project has proven overwhelming. Initial plans to build 16 km of The Line by 2030 have been revised to a more modest 2.4 km, with only a half-mile section, including a stadium, expected by 2034. The city's ambitious design, which includes towering structures over 1,640 feet tall, has faced engineering challenges, prompting cost-cutting suggestions, including reducing the height to 1,000 feet, though Crown Prince Salman has rejected this idea, insisting on maintaining the original vision.

Markets End Flat Amid Volatility Oil Price Drop and Quality Stocks Support Recovery



Domestic stock markets closed flat on Tuesday. Benchmark indices started the morning gap-down on the back of a crash in the US markets and negative signals internationally. Investors bought on the back of falling oil prices, falling dollar index, improving domestic earnings and availability of quality stocks at attractive prices. As a result, the indices recovered their intraday losses. As long as the Nifty is trading above 22,300 and the Sensex above 73,700, there is scope for short-term bullishness.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 74,115 in the previous session, opened at 73,743 on Tuesday. It touched an intraday low of 73,663. It reached an in-

traday high of 74,195. It finally closed at 74,102, down 12 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 22,345, touched a low of 22,314 and a high of 22,522. It closed at 22,497, up 37 points. The Nifty Bank lost 362 points and settled at 47,853.

In the Nifty50, 33 companies gained while 17 lost. Realty, oil and gas, PSE, infra, finance, healthcare, and metal stocks rose. Bank, IT, auto, media, and FMCG stocks faced selling pressure. Trent, BPCL, Sun Pharma, ICICI Bank, Shriram Finance were the top gainers. IndusInd, Infi, M&M, and Ba-



MURTHY NAIDU PAADAM
Stock Market Analyst
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jaj Finserv lost the most.

Market breadth turned in favour of sellers on NSE today. 2958 stocks traded while 1850 lost. 1041 gained. 14 shares reached 52-week highs and 200 shares touched 52-week lows. 46 shares reached upper circuit and 205 reached lower circuit.

Poly Medicare gets Medical Device Regulation certification for 54 products in Europe. CG Power signs long-term supply agreement with Kynet Railway Solutions. Godrej Agrovet to acquire 48.06% stake in Creamline Dairy Products for Rs 930 crore. Rupee strengthens 12 paise against dollar to settle at 87.21. HSBC has given a buy rating to SBI Cards with a target price of Rs 1000. It has maintained a buy rating on BPCL, HPCL and IOC. Jefferies has retained a buy rating on Voltas with a target price of Rs 1990. Zydus Life Sciences will acquire French company Medtech Amplitude Surgical for Rs 2447 crore. Hindustan Zinc Board has approved the issue of NCDs worth Rs 500 crore. Anupam Rasayyan signs a ten-year agreement with a Korean multinational company. Bharat Electronics has secured orders worth Rs 843 crore.

KSB Ltd

KSB announced a ₹150 crore investment to expand its pump manufacturing facilities, targeting increased demand in infrastructure, agricul-

ture, and water management. The company's robust order book and focus on premium pump solutions ensure steady revenue growth. Analysts maintain a 'Buy' rating with a good target based on its strong fundamentals and expansion strategy.

BPCL (Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd)



BPCL announced a ₹10,000 crore investment to expand refining capacity by 15% over the next two years. Improved refining margins, lower crude oil prices, and stable domestic demand are positive indicators.

Laurus Labs

Laurus Labs invested ₹200 crore to expand its API (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient) production. The company's CDMO (Contract Development



and Manufacturing Organization) segment is showing strong future growth potential despite near-term headwinds. Analysts maintain a 'Hold' rating with a good target price

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd.

Chennai Petroleum posted a 20% rise in Q3 net profit, attributed to better refining margins and improved operational efficiency. The company continues to strengthen its presence in the refining sector with increased output and cost control strategies.



Tube Investments of India (TII India)

TII India has diversified its business into EV components, enhancing its future growth trajectory. The company's strategic partnerships and investments in innovative technologies are expected to drive revenue growth. Jefferies maintains a 'Buy' rating with a target price of ₹3,600, highlighting the company's strong positioning in the engineering sector.



India's Coal Imports Drop by 8.4%, Saving Rs 42,315 Crore in Foreign Exchange

India's coal imports witnessed a notable decline of 8.4% in the April-December period of the current fiscal year, reaching 183.42 million tonnes (MT), compared to 200.19 MT in the same period last year. This reduction in imports resulted in significant foreign exchange savings, estimated at approximately Rs 42,315 crore (USD 5.43 billion), according to the Ministry of Coal.

The decline in coal imports was particularly evident in the non-regulated sector, excluding the power sector, which saw a sharper drop of 12.01% year-on-year. Despite this overall decrease, coal-based power generation registered a growth of 3.53% from April to December 2024, compared to the previous year. Notably, imports for blending by thermal power plants saw a sharp decline of 29.8%, reflecting the country's efforts to reduce reliance on foreign coal.

Several government initiatives, such as the commercial mining reforms and the "Mission Coking Coal" program, have contributed to this decline by boosting domestic coal production. These initiatives aim to increase the availability of coal within the country, thereby reducing the need for imports.

Additionally, India's coal output during the April-December period of the current fiscal grew by 6.11%, as compared to the same period in 2023-24. The government's focus on enhancing



domestic production, along with ongoing efforts to reduce imports, has played a key role in this positive shift.

Overall, the reduction in coal imports and the resulting foreign exchange savings reflect India's ongoing commitment to improving energy security and reducing dependency on foreign sources.

RBI to issue Rs 100 and Rs 200 notes bearing signature of Guv Malhotra

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced on Tuesday that it will soon release new banknotes in the denominations of Rs 100 and Rs 200, featuring the signature of the newly appointed RBI Governor, Sanjay Malhotra.

According to the statement issued by the central bank, the design of these new notes will be identical to the Rs 100 and Rs 200 banknotes currently in circulation under the Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series. The RBI assured the public that all previously issued Rs 100 and Rs 200 notes, regardless of the signature, will continue to remain valid and legal tender.

Governor Sanjay Malhotra, who assumed office in December 2024, replaces Shaktikanta Das, whose term as RBI Governor concluded after an extended period. As part of the usual currency replacement cycle, the issuance of these new notes with Malhotra's signature marks a continuation of the central bank's routine process of updating currency designs to reflect leadership transitions.

The RBI's move to issue new notes comes at a time when the Indian economy is closely monitoring various monetary and fiscal measures. This step is expected to have little immediate impact on the everyday circulation of currency, as the new notes will closely mirror the existing ones in terms of design and security features.

While there is no change in the look or feel of the Rs 100 and Rs 200 denominations, the signature update highlights the shift in leadership at the RBI, underscoring the institution's role in managing the country's monetary policy and financial systems.

Overall, the issuance of these new banknotes is part of the RBI's ongoing efforts to ensure smooth currency circulation while commemorating leadership changes at the central bank.



Rupee gains 1 paisa to 87.30 against US dollar in early trade



The Indian rupee traded almost flat against the US dollar on Tuesday morning, gaining just 1 paisa to reach 87.30. This marginal gain was supported by a weaker American currency and a dip in global crude oil prices. However, the rupee's progress was tempered by ongoing volatility in domestic equity markets, which have been negatively affected by concerns over a potential recession in the United States and uncertain-

ties surrounding trade relations.

Forex traders noted that despite the positive movement from the US dollar's weakness and lower oil prices, investor sentiment remained cautious. Fears of an economic slowdown in the US and the resulting uncertainties in global trade have raised concerns among market participants, contributing to instability in the Indian stock markets. These factors have impacted the rupee's ability to make more significant gains, as traders remain wary of the broader economic environment.

The combination of these global and domestic factors has led to a mixed outlook for the rupee, with investors closely monitoring developments in both the equity markets and international trade negotiations. Although the weakening of the US dollar has provided some short-term support to the Indian currency, the outlook remains uncertain, and much depends on the resolution of key geopolitical and economic challenges.

Overall, while the rupee's small gain on Tuesday was a positive sign, the forex market's volatility suggests that further fluctuations could occur as investors continue to navigate global uncertainties.

2025 BYD Seal, Atto 3 Launched in India; Bookings Open



BYD has launched the 2025 models of the Seal electric sedan and the Atto 3 electric SUV in India, marking its first anniversary in the country. The new models come with several feature upgrades, while bookings have officially opened.

2025 BYD Seal: Key Updates

The BYD Seal electric sedan receives several enhancements, including:

New standard features: Power sunshade, upgraded AC system with enhanced purification, and silver-plated dimming canopy.

Connectivity: Wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

Suspension Upgrades: The Performance variant gets BYD's DiSus-C intelligent damping system, while the Premium variant comes with Frequency Selective Dampers for improved ride comfort.

Battery, Range, and Variants

Seal Dynamic – 61.44 kWh battery, 510 km ARAI range.

Seal Premium – 82.56 kWh battery, 650 km ARAI range.

Seal Performance – 82.56 kWh battery, 580 km ARAI range.

The pricing for the Seal sedan is yet to be announced.

2025 BYD Atto 3: Key Updates

The Atto 3 electric SUV gets a refreshed feature list, including:

All-black interior for a sportier look.

Ventilated front seats for improved comfort.

Upgraded low-voltage Lithium Iron Phosphate (LFP) battery, claimed to have five times better self-discharge control and a 15-year lifespan.

Battery, Range, and Variants

The Atto 3 is available in three variants:

Dynamic – 49.92 kWh battery, 468 km ARAI range.

Premium & Superior – 60.48 kWh battery, 580 km ARAI range.

Booking and Pricing

Bookings for both models are now open.

The BYD Seal requires a booking token of ₹1.25 lakh, with pricing yet to be revealed.

The Atto 3 will be offered at 2024 model prices for the first 3,000 customers, starting at ₹24.99 lakh (ex-showroom).

Would you consider these EVs for your next car purchase?

SAFF U19 Championship 2025 India Drawn With Nepal, Sri Lanka in Group B

India's Fixtures
May 9: India vs Sri Lanka
May 13: India vs Nepal
May 16: Semi-finals
May 18: Final

The draw for the SAFF U19 Championship 2025 was conducted on Tuesday in Kathmandu, placing defending champions India in Group B alongside Nepal and Sri Lanka. The tournament will be hosted at the Golden Jubilee Stadium in Yupia, Arunachal Pradesh, from May 9 to 18, 2025. Maldives, Bhutan, and Bangladesh have been placed in Group A. The competition format

sees the top two teams from each group advancing to the semi-finals on May 16, with the final set for May 18. The draw was based on the latest FIFA men's rankings as of December 2024.

India won the previous edition in 2023, defeating Pakistan 3-0 in the final held in Kathmandu. In 2024, the tournament was played at the U20 level, where India exited in the semi-finals after a penalty shootout loss to Bangladesh. This will be the fourth time India hosts a SAFF age-group competition, following previous tournaments in Bhubaneswar (U20 men, 2022), Jamshedpur (U18 women, 2022), and Kalyani (U15 men, 2019).



Lauki for Skin Health

The Secret to Naturally Glowing and Hydrated Skin

THE POINT DESK

Lauki, or bottle gourd, is more than just a common kitchen ingredient—it's a powerhouse of skin-nourishing nutrients. With a high water content (92%) and rich reserves of vitamin C, zinc, iron, and antioxidants, lauki helps maintain clear, glowing skin. From fighting acne to preventing premature aging, this humble vegetable offers multiple skincare benefits.

How Lauki Boosts Skin Health

- **Deeply Hydrates** – Keeps skin soft and supple by maintaining hydration.
- **Promotes Natural Glow** – Rich in vitamin C, it boosts collagen and enhances

skin elasticity.

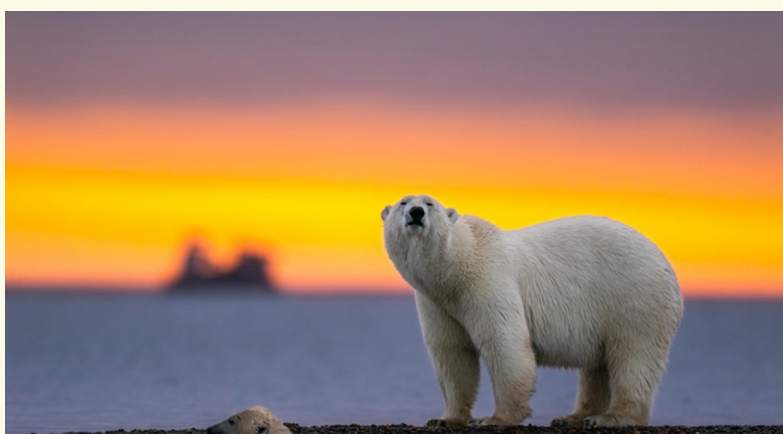
- **Fights Acne & Blemishes** – Its antibacterial properties control oil and prevent breakouts.
- **Detoxifies the Skin** – Flushes out toxins, reducing impurities and inflammation.
- **Reduces Skin Inflammation** – Soothes redness, puffiness, and sunburn.
- **Delays Premature Aging** – Packed with antioxidants that combat fine lines and wrinkles.
- **Evens Out Skin Tone** – Helps lighten dark spots and pigmentation.
- **Heals Sun Damage** – Repairs and

soothes tanned or sunburnt skin.

- **Prevents Dark Circles** – Hydrates and refreshes under-eye skin, reducing puffiness.
- **How to Use Lauki for Skincare**
- **Drink Fresh Lauki Juice** – Detoxifies and enhances skin clarity.
- **Include in Diet** – Add to curries, soups, or smoothies for long-term benefits.
- **Apply as a Face Mask** – Mix lauki juice with turmeric or aloe vera for a soothing skin treatment.
- **A natural skincare secret**, lauki can be your go-to solution for achieving youthful and radiant skin!



6 Places Where the Sun Never Sets



Imagine a world where the sun refuses to sleep, where midnight feels like midday, and night is just a concept. Welcome to the land of the midnight sun! In regions near the Arctic and Antarctic Circles, Earth's tilt keeps the sun visible for weeks or even months. If you've ever wanted to experience broad daylight at 2 AM, these destinations should be on your travel list.

1. Tromsø, Norway



From late May to late July, Tromsø enjoys uninterrupted daylight. Locals embrace the sun with late-night hikes, music festivals, and even midnight golf—because why sleep when the sun never sets?

2. Svalbard, Norway

Four months of continuous daylight? Yes, you read that right. From April to August, this Arctic archipelago basks in endless sunshine, making it perfect for glacier trekking and polar bear spotting.

3. Reykjavik, Iceland

Between mid-May and mid-July, Reykjavik experiences nearly 21 hours of daylight, with the sun merely hovering near the horizon. Celebrate with the Secret Solstice Festival or soak in a geothermal lagoon at midnight.

4. Yukon, Canada

In June and July, the Yukon basks in endless daylight. The Midnight Sun Baseball Game, played at 10:30 PM without artificial lights, is a must-see. Road-trippers can also drive through the

Arctic Circle under a never-ending sunset.

5. Finland

Lapland experiences up to 70 days of continuous daylight, known as "yötön yö" or "nightless night." Midnight marathons, sauna sessions, and lakeside parties make the most of this surreal phenomenon.

6. St. Petersburg, Russia

Though not fully sunlit 24/7, St. Petersburg's "White Nights" (late May to mid-July) keep the city glowing. The White Nights Festival transforms the city into a vibrant cultural hub with ballet, opera, concerts, and fireworks.

How Do People Sleep Here?

Locals rely on blackout curtains, sleep masks, and sheer exhaustion from taking full advantage of the endless daylight. Some stick to a routine, while others embrace the midnight sun lifestyle.

Would you visit one of these places to experience the magic of a sleepless sun?



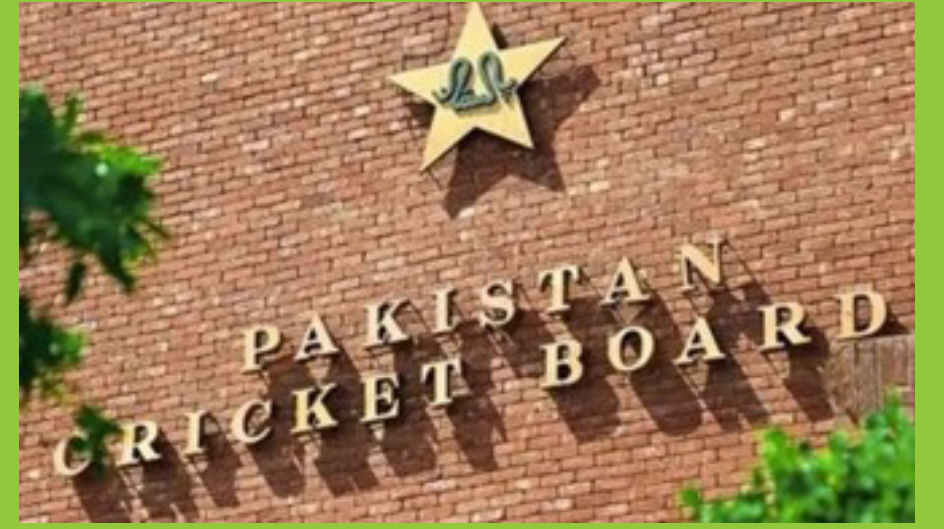
Rohit Sharma Joins Elite Captains' Club After CT Win



Indian skipper Rohit Sharma has etched his name alongside legendary captains after delivering a match-winning performance in the Champions Trophy final against New Zealand in Dubai. Rohit became only the fourth captain and the second Indian, after MS Dhoni, to win the Player of the Match award in an ICC tournament final. Joining an exclusive list featuring Clive Lloyd (1975), Ricky Ponting (2003), and Dhoni (2011), Rohit powered India's chase with a blistering 76 off 83 balls. His aggressive approach dismantled New Zealand's 251-run defense, ensuring India's four-wicket triumph at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

Despite wickets tumbling at the other end, Rohit anchored the innings with calculated aggression. His explosive start in the powerplay set the tone, and even after his dismissal, India remained in control. Speaking after the match, Rohit emphasized his consistent approach, saying, "I have not done anything different. I know how important it is to score runs in the powerplay because after 10 overs, it becomes difficult when the field spreads and spinners come into play." His fearless batting and leadership sealed India's dominance, adding another ICC trophy to his captaincy record.

PCB's Financial Struggles Exposed Amid Drastic Cost-Cutting



The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is facing serious financial concerns, as evidenced by a series of cost-cutting measures, including a drastic reduction in domestic match fees and downgraded player facilities. The upcoming National T20 Championship will see player match fees slashed from ₹100,000 to just ₹10,000 per match, with reserve players receiving ₹5,000. According to sources, PCB's domestic cricket head, Abdullah Khurram Niazi, has overseen multiple facility downgrades in recent months. Players who previously stayed in four and five-star hotels are now being accommodated in budget lodgings, and air travel privileges have been reduced. Additionally, outstanding payments from the previous season remain unpaid for players and umpires.

Despite these cuts, the PCB continues to pay hefty salaries to top officials, selectors, and mentors. Misbah ul Haq, Waqar Younis, Shoaib Malik, Sarfaraz Ahmed, and Saqlain Mushtaq—appointed as mentors—are reportedly receiving ₹5 million per month under two-year contracts. Meanwhile, the PCB has spent approximately ₹1.8 billion on stadium upgrades for the upcoming Champions Trophy. The financial strain has also affected former cricketers, with the board yet to implement the promised annual pension increase. The stark contrast between the PCB's cost-cutting for players and its lavish spending on officials has raised serious questions about its financial management.



Manchester United has announced plans to build a new 100,000-capacity stadium near Old Trafford, with co-owner Jim Ratcliffe calling it the "world's greatest" football ground. The decision follows extensive consultations on whether to upgrade Old Trafford or construct a new venue as part of the Old Trafford Regeneration Task Force. The club estimates that the stadium, expected to cost around £2 billion (\$2.6 billion), will take approximately five years to complete. However, a start date has yet to be confirmed. The project, designed by renowned architects Foster + Partners, aims to transform the surrounding area and potentially contribute £7.3 billion per year to the UK economy while creat-

ing 92,000 jobs. "Our current stadium has served us brilliantly for 115 years, but it has fallen behind the best arenas in world sport," Ratcliffe said. "United is the world's biggest football club, and it deserves a stadium that reflects its stature." The move has received backing from legendary former manager Sir Alex Ferguson, who emphasized the need to "be brave and seize this opportunity to build a new home, fit for the future, where new history can be made." Old Trafford, England's largest club ground with a 74,000 capacity, has been United's home since 1910 but has faced increasing criticism over maintenance issues. The proposed

new stadium will feature an umbrella-like design covering a public plaza twice the size of Trafalgar Square and three towering masts known as "Trident," visible from 40 kilometers away. Concerns remain over funding, with United already burdened by nearly £1 billion in debt. CEO Omar Berrada stated that financing options are being explored, calling it a "very attractive investment opportunity." The Manchester United Supporters' Trust urged the club to involve fans throughout the process, questioning potential ticket price increases, impact on atmosphere, and whether the project would divert resources from squad investments.

52nd Senior National Carrom Championship in New Delhi

Top players to compete in national event from March 17-21

The All India Carrom Federation (AICF) is set to host the 52nd Senior National Carrom Championship (Men & Women) for 2024-25, from March 17 to 21, 2025, in New Delhi. The event, which will witness participation from top carrom players across the country, promises to be a grand affair, with a strong lineup of officials and umpires ensuring smooth conduct. Key Officials Overseeing the Championship The championship is being organized under the leadership of Mrs. Bharti Narayan, General Secretary of AICF, along with Mr. V. D. Narayan and Mr. Shahid Farooq, General Secretary and Secretary of the Delhi Carrom Association (DCA), respectively. International umpires Mr. Gurinder Singh and Mr. Kashi Ram will be officiating matches, while Mr. S. Shoban Raj, Convener of the Um-

pires Committee, will oversee umpiring responsibilities. Several other senior officials, including Mr. SK. Abdul Jaleel, Mr. J. Srinivasan, and Mr. M. P. Hemantha Kumar, will also play key roles in the tournament's management. The Championship Committee includes several prominent personalities, led by AICF President and Member of Parliament, Mr. Rakibul Hussain. Other notable members include: Mr. Girish Vyas - Patron, AICF Dr. Neeraj Kumar Sampathy - Senior Vice President, AICF Mr. B N Singh - Associate Vice President, AICF Mr. S. Madan Raj - Treasurer, AICF Mr. Prabhjeet Singh Bachher, Mr. Gurinder Singh, and Mr. Vijay Kumar - Vice Presidents, AICF Mr. Nazar Khan, Mr. Khursheed Khan, Mr.



Santhosh Kumar, Mr. Maneksh P.S., and Mr. Sooraj Khatri - Associate Vice Presidents, AICF Participation and Expectations The tournament will bring together top carrom players from across India, competing for national honors. With Delhi hosting the event, anticipation is high for a competitive championship that will showcase the best talent in the sport. The AICF's commitment to promoting carrom at the highest level is evident in the meticulous planning and the presence of experienced officials.

Satwik, Chirag and Lakshya Sen Drop Out of BWF Top 10

Indian badminton stars Satwik-Isairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty and Lakshya Sen have suffered a major setback, dropping out of the top 10 in the latest Badminton World Federation (BWF) rankings. This marks the first time since November 2021 that the men's doubles duo has fallen outside the top 10, slipping five places to 12th. The decline follows a rough phase for Rankireddy and Shetty, who last played at the Badminton

Asia Team Mixed Championships in February. Their disappointing run at the 2024 Paris Olympics led to significant changes in their training setup, including parting ways with coach Mathias Boe. They are now under the mentorship of Tan Kim Her, the coach who originally paired them together. Despite the drop, they remain India's highest-ranked men's doubles pair. In men's singles, Lakshya Sen has also fallen in the rankings, slipping

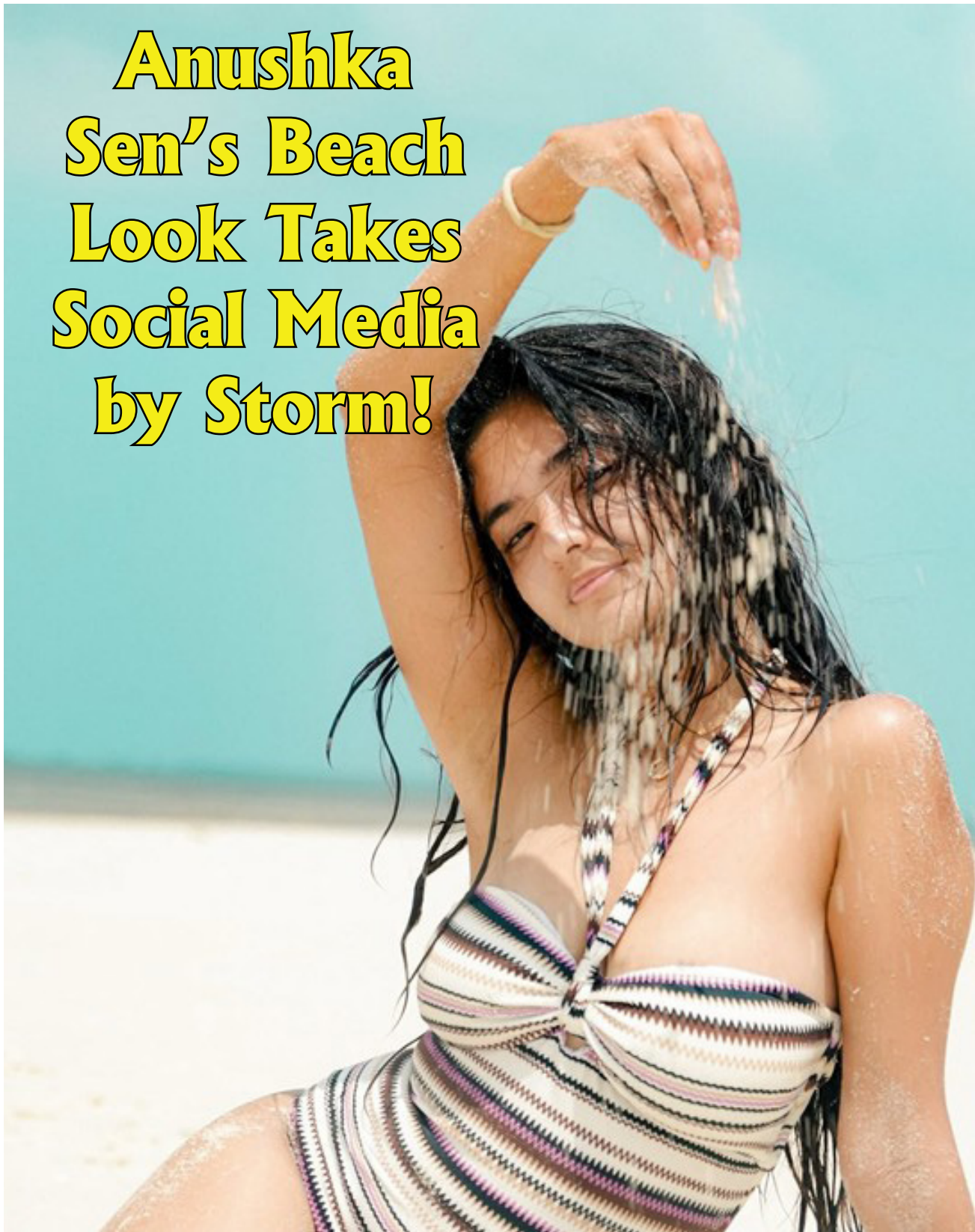
from 10th to 15th. His early exits at the Malaysia Open and India Open, along with a Round of 16 finish at the Indonesia Masters Super 500, have contributed to his decline. Meanwhile, PV Sindhu has dropped one place to 16th in women's singles but remains the only Indian shuttler in the top 20. In contrast, the women's doubles duo of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand continues to hold the ninth spot, keeping India's pres-

ence strong in the category. In mixed doubles, Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila reached a career-best ranking of 19th, making Crasto the first Indian female shuttler to break into the top 20 with three different partners across categories. Among emerging talents, Ayush Shetty climbed to a career-high 43rd after his semi-final run at the Orleans Masters, solidifying his position as India's fifth-highest-ranked men's singles player.





Anushka Sen's Beach Look Takes Social Media by Storm!



Bollywood sensation Anushka Sen, known for her vibrant screen presence, is once again in the spotlight. At just 22, she has carved a niche for herself in films, TV shows, web series, and music videos. With a massive fanbase of over 40 million followers on Instagram, every post of hers grabs instant attention.

Recently, Anushka's stunning beach look set the internet ablaze. The actress shared a series of breathtaking pictures from her beach getaway, exuding effortless charm and confidence. Dressed in a chic yet breezy outfit, she perfectly complemented the sun-kissed shores, leaving fans in

awe of her style.

Her post quickly went viral, with fans flooding the comments section with heart and fire emojis, praising her beauty and elegance. Known for her impeccable fashion sense, Anushka continues to be a trendsetter for Gen Z.

From television to digital platforms, Anushka Sen's journey has been nothing short of inspiring. Whether it's her acting prowess or her social media presence, she never fails to make headlines. With several exciting projects in the pipeline, the young starlet is all set to take her career to even greater heights.

Rajamouli Infuses Mythological Essence Into SSMB 29

Superstar Mahesh Babu's much-anticipated film with master storyteller SS Rajamouli, tentatively titled SSMB 29, has been creating a buzz ever since its announcement. Initially promoted as a high-stakes action-adventure set against a dense forest backdrop, new reports suggest the film carries a deeper narrative rooted in Indian history and mythology.

According to sources, SSMB 29 will unravel an intriguing storyline that originates in the ancient city of Kashi. The film is expected to weave together elements of divinity and history, setting the stage for an intense action saga that unfolds in the present era. Since filming in Kashi poses logistical challenges, the makers are recreating a grand set in Hyderabad to bring the historical elements to life.



These revelations have further heightened anticipation, with Rajamouli reportedly planning to deliver a visually spectacular cinematic experience. The film is set to be shot across breathtaking locations in India, Africa, and other international destinations, ensuring a global scale for its narrative. Currently, the team is shoot-

ing crucial sequences in Odisha. SSMB 29 boasts a stellar cast, with Priyanka Chopra and Prithviraj Sukumaran playing key roles alongside Mahesh Babu. The legendary MM Keeravani is composing the music, promising yet another memorable soundtrack for this ambitious project.

Vicky Kaushal's Chhaava Overtakes Gadar 2 Becomes 10th-Highest-Grossing Indian Film



Vicky Kaushal and Rashmika Mandanna's historical drama Chhaava continues its strong run at the box office, surpassing Gadar 2 to become the 10th-highest-grossing Indian film. Released on February 14, the film has maintained its momentum, collecting ₹6.25 crore on its 25th day across all languages, as per a report by Sacnilk. With this, Chhaava has amassed a total domestic collection of ₹526.05 crore, overtaking Gadar 2, which had a lifetime collection of ₹525.7

crore.

Following the film's entry into the ₹500 crore club, Vicky Kaushal took to Instagram to express his gratitude. Sharing a poster of the film, he wrote, "What you all have given to Chhaava goes much beyond numbers... you all have made this an emotion." He further thanked audiences for celebrating the legacy of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and urged them to continue watching the film.

Directed by Laxman Utekar, Chhaava is adapted from

Shivaji Sawant's Marathi novel of the same name. Vicky Kaushal portrays Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, while Rashmika Mandanna plays Maharani Yesubai. The film also features Akshaye Khanna as Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, Diana Penty as Aurangzeb's daughter Shehzadi Zinat-un-Nissa Begum, and Ashutosh Rana as Sarsenapati Hambirao Mohite. The film is produced by Dinesh Vijan under Maddock Films.

Kim Soo Hyun Denies Dating Rumors With Late Actress Kim Sae-Ron

Sae-Ron



Kim Soo Hyun has found himself at the center of controversy following allegations about his alleged past relationship with the late actress Kim Sae-Ron. The rumors surfaced after Kim Sae-Ron's aunt made serious accusations in a video posted on the YouTube channel Garosero Research Institute. She claimed that Kim Soo Hyun had been in a six-year relationship with Kim Sae-Ron, which allegedly began when she was just 15. The aunt also accused the actor of distancing himself from her after her DUI incident in 2022 and alleged that his agency, Gold Medalist, played a role in her financial struggles, which she claimed contributed to her tragic passing last month. In response, Gold Medalist strongly refuted these claims, calling them "baseless and malicious." In an official statement, the agency stated, "The claims made by Garosero Research Institute regarding Kim Soo Hyun on YouTube today are completely false. They alleged that our company and Kim Soo Hyun colluded with YouTuber Lee Jin Ho to ha-

arrass the late Kim Sae-Ron, that Kim Soo Hyun had been dating her since she was 15, that our agency's response to her drunk driving accident was unfair, and that our manager had a close relationship with YouTuber Lee Jin Ho." The agency further stated that they are reviewing legal action against Garosero Research Institute for spreading false information.

Expressing their sorrow over Kim Sae-Ron's passing, Gold Medalist added, "We are deeply heartbroken by the news of the late Kim

Sae-Ron's death, as she was once part of our company, and we mourn her passing. However, the dissemination of such false information directly continues the very same cyber harassment that caused her great distress during her lifetime." The agency also criticized Garosero Research Institute for spreading baseless rumors and condemned the false claims made by Kim Sae-Ron's aunt. They urged fans to refrain from spreading, amplifying, or reproducing false information.

Why Pooja Hegde Was the First Choice for Suriya's Retro

Pooja Hegde has made a name for herself in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi cinema, working alongside some of the biggest stars. After her Bollywood debut with Hrithik Roshan in Mohenjo Daro, she is now gearing up for her next Tamil film, Retro, alongside Suriya.

Stone Bench Films, the production house behind Retro, recently

revealed why Pooja Hegde was their top choice for the female lead. They highlighted her dedication and willingness to dub in her own voice for the Tamil film, a first for her.

The team shared that when director Karthik Subbaraj was searching for the lead actress, several names were considered, but Pooja stood out. Even the

film's lead character, Pandiyaa, was convinced she was the perfect fit. The only concern was her fluency in Tamil. However, known for taking on challenges, Pooja assured the team that she would overcome the language barrier.

After an impressive look test, she started daily Tamil training and surprised everyone by delivering

lengthy monologue sequences effortlessly. The team also recalled fun moments on set where they tested her with difficult Tamil words.

Retro features Suriya and Pooja Hegde in lead roles, along with Joju George, Jayaram, and Karunakaran in key supporting roles. The film is set to release in theatres on May 1, 2025.

