

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

H 33° C

L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

H 35° C

L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

H 36° C

L 26° C

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New Zealand PM Christopher Luxon to be the Chief Guest.

Theme for 2025: “Kālachakra - People, Peace and Planet.”

Event to host over 3,500 participants from 125 countries.

PM MODI TO INAUGURATE RAISINA DIALOGUE 2025

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the tenth edition of the Raisina Dialogue on March 17, 2025. The prestigious conference, recognized as India’s flagship event on geopolitics and geo-economics, is jointly organized by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The three-day event will take place in New Delhi from March 17 to 19. New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon will be the Chief Guest at the inaugural session and is set to deliver the keynote address. The conference will witness participation from a diverse group of global leaders, including ministers, diplomats, former heads of state, business executives, strategic thinkers, and policy experts from around 125 countries. This year’s theme, “Kālachakra - People, Peace and Planet,” signifies a focus on interconnected global challenges, sustainability, and diplomacy in an evolving world order. The discussions

will take place across six thematic pillars, covering topics such as climate change, global security, multilateral cooperation, and emerging technologies. Over the years, the Raisina Dialogue has gained prominence as a key platform for high-level discussions on international affairs, serving as a forum for deliberations on pressing global issues. Previous editions have seen participation from world leaders such as Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu, Australian PM Scott Morrison, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. The 2025 edition will feature a series of keynote speeches, panel discussions, and interactive sessions aimed at fostering global cooperation and strategic partnerships. With more than 3,500 participants expected, the conference is set to shape conversations on India’s role in global diplomacy and its vision for a stable, peaceful, and prosperous world.

Hurting Hindu Sentiments

Kedarnath MLA seeks ban on non-Hindus

BJP MLA Asha Nautiyal calls for a ban on non-Hindus at Kedarnath

Congress leader Harish Rawat criticises the remarks

BJP backs Nautiyal, alleging instances of liquor and meat sales in the Kedarnath region.

Centre approves ₹4,081 crore Kedarnath ropeway project to boost tourism and pilgrimage access.

TPN Correspondent | Kedarnath BJP MLA from Kedarnath, Asha Nautiyal, has called for a ban on non-Hindus from entering the Kedarnath temple premises, alleging

that certain individuals are engaging in activities that hurt Hindu sentiments and tarnish the sanctity of the pilgrimage site. Nautiyal claimed that concerns were raised in a recent meeting with local businessmen regarding such incidents. “They told me that non-Hindus are deliberately doing activities that offend Hindu pilgrims. Since I am an MLA, it is my responsibility to address this. Pilgrims should return from Char Dham with the same faith they arrive with,” she stated. She further insisted that the individuals involved in such actions were “definitely non-Hindus” and should be restricted from entering the temple. “If such concerns have been raised, there must be some truth to them. We will demand a ban on their entry,” she added. Backing Nautiyal’s remarks, BJP’s media-in-charge Manveer Singh Chauhan claimed that the party fully supports her stance, as it concerns Hindu religious sentiments. He also alleged that local businessmen have reported instances of

meat and liquor being sold in Kedarnath, which he described as inappropriate for a sacred pilgrimage site. However, Congress leader and former Chief Minister Harish Singh Rawat dismissed Nautiyal’s comments as “sensational” and accused BJP leaders of creating religious controversies for political mileage. “Uttarakhand is the land of the gods. How long will BJP leaders keep attaching everything to religion? If there are genuine concerns, action should be taken without unnecessary uproar,” Rawat stated. Meanwhile, in a significant development for Uttarakhand’s tourism infrastructure, the Union Cabinet has approved two major ropeway projects at Kedarnath and Hemkund Sahib. The Kedarnath ropeway, a 12.9 km project from Sonprayag to Kedarnath, will be developed at a cost of ₹4,081.28 crore under the public-private partnership model. It will employ the advanced Tri-cable Detachable Gondola (3S) technology and is expected to transport 18,000 passengers daily.

ED challenges bail granted to Arvind Kejriwal in excise policy case.

Delhi High Court to hear the plea today.

Kejriwal was arrested by ED on March 21, 2024.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court is set to hear the Enforcement Directorate’s (ED) petition on Monday against the bail granted to former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the excise policy-linked money laundering case. The plea is listed before Justice Ravinder Dudeja. Kejriwal was granted bail by a trial court on June 20, 2024, upon furnishing a personal bond of ₹1 lakh. However, the Delhi HC had stayed the bail order after the ED challenged it. The agency argued that

Delhi HC to hear ED’s plea against Kejriwal’s bail today

Kejriwal’s release could hinder the investigation, while Kejriwal’s counsel countered that all other accused in the case had already been granted bail.

The Supreme Court had previously granted Kejriwal interim bail on July 12, 2023, referring legal questions on the necessity of arrests under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act to a larger bench. Kejriwal was first arrested by the ED on March 21, 2024, in connection with the money laundering probe. He was later arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on June 26 over corruption allegations related to the Delhi excise policy. The 2021 excise policy, which was scrapped in 2022, had come under scrutiny after then-Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena ordered a CBI investigation into alleged irregularities. Both the CBI and ED have alleged that modifications in the policy led to undue benefits for liquor licence holders, resulting in financial losses to the exchequer.

‘Parvesh my brother,’ says Delhi CM Rekha Gupta

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Saturday addressed speculation of a rift with cabinet minister Parvesh Verma, calling him her “brother” and emphasizing that their bond goes beyond political positions. Speaking at a memorial service for former Delhi Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma, who was also Verma’s father, Gupta asserted that it did not matter who held the Chief Minister’s post between them. Her remarks seemed to be a direct response to reports suggesting tensions after Verma was not chosen for the top

CM Rekha Gupta dismisses rift speculations with minister Parvesh Verma.

Calls their bond that of a ‘sister and brother’ and pledges to work together.

Statement made at a memorial service for former CM Sahib Singh Verma.

post. “In Indian society, the elder sister is often entrusted with responsibility first. Today, his (Sahib Singh) daughter is the chief minister, and his son (Parvesh) is a minister. It could have been the other way, but it is all the same. We promise to work together to fulfill the dreams Sahib Singh Verma had envisioned for the national capital,” she said.

Her comments signal unity within the Delhi leadership, dismissing any internal discord and reaffirming a collective commitment to governance.

India, New Zealand Resume free Trade Agreement Talks

- India and New Zealand to restart FTA talks, stalled since 2015.
- The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) was initiated in 2010.
- The announcement coincides with New Zealand PM Christopher Luxon’s India visit.
- The deal aims to enhance supply chain integration and market access.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

India and New Zealand have announced the resumption of negotiations for a long-pending free trade agreement, marking a significant step in boosting bilateral economic ties. The discussions, which initially began in April 2010

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Purple Fest 2025 to be held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on March 21

- Annual event promotes inclusivity for persons with disabilities.
- Cultural events, sports competitions, and skill-building workshops planned.
- President Droupadi Murmu to attend the closing ceremony.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Purple Fest 2025, a flagship event by the Social Justice Ministry dedicated to persons with disabilities (PwDs), will take place at Rashtrapati Bhavan on March 21, the government announced on Saturday. The event aims to promote inclusivity and showcase the talents of PwDs across various domains.

Last year's edition saw participation from over 10,000 PwDs, and this year's fest is set to offer an expanded range of activities. The festival will feature cultural performances, sports competitions, and skill-building workshops, bringing together students from special and inclusive schools with disability-friendly infrastructure. Attendees will also have exclusive access to the gardens of Amrit Udyan.

The event will include unique attractions such as the Purple Fun Zone, where disability rights organisations will host interactive games, and the Purple Café, serving food prepared by chefs with disabilities. The Purple Kaleidoscope gallery will exhibit accessible paintings, photographs, and artworks with



audio descriptions, tactile elements, and Braille signage.

For sports enthusiasts, Purple Sports will include wheelchair basketball, blind football, and boccia. The Abilympics—often called the “Olympics of Abilities”—will highlight the professional skills of PwDs in 12 different vocations. Meanwhile, Purple Books, Movies, and Canvas will provide aspiring writers, directors, and photographers a platform to connect with industry professionals.

The festival will conclude with a grand cultural evening graced by President Droupadi Murmu, featuring performances by artistes with disabilities, celebrating their creativity and resilience.

DTC’s Cashless Ticketing Trial Underway at Selected Depots

- Passengers using the NCMC card get a 10% discount on fares.
- The trial is active at Rajghat and Hasanpur depots.
- DTC plans to expand the system across all buses.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) has initiated a pilot project to transition towards a cashless ticketing system, allowing passengers to use the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) for fare payments. Inspired by the Delhi Metro’s contactless payment model, this initiative aims to modernize the public transport system and improve commuter convenience.

Currently, the cashless system is being tested on buses operating from Rajghat and Hasanpur depots. To encourage adoption, passengers using the NCMC card receive a 10% discount on fares. Officials have reported a positive response to the trial, and preparations are underway to roll out the system across all DTC buses.

To ensure secure transactions, DTC has partnered with Canara Bank, which is providing a reliable payment gateway for processing digital payments. The system is supported by newly installed Electronic Ticketing Machines (ETMs), allowing passengers to tap their NCMC cards for seamless ticket purchases. So far, 345 ETMs have



been introduced—100 at Rajghat depot and 245 at Hasanpur depot—as part of the initial phase. In an effort to raise awareness, DTC has placed digital displays inside buses and made announcements highlighting the benefits of the system. Additional promotional efforts, including sticker ads and onboard notices, will be launched soon to encourage wider adoption.

Officials have expressed optimism about the citywide implementation of cashless ticketing, which is expected to streamline operations, reduce dependency on cash transactions, and enhance commuter experience. If successful, the initiative could pave the way for integrating all public transport systems under the NCMC framework, making travel in Delhi more efficient and hassle-free.

Injured black kite rescued from NSA Ajit Doval’s residence, rehabilitated

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A black kite that was found injured at the residence of National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval was rescued and rehabilitated before being released back into the wild, officials said on Saturday.

The bird, a common raptor in Delhi-NCR, was discovered inside the security control room of Doval’s residence on Thursday with visible injuries on its wing. Security personnel immediately contacted Wildlife SOS, which sent a rescue team to assess and transport the distressed kite for medical treatment.

Wildlife SOS officials said the kite underwent a veterinary examination and was treated for its injuries. It was kept under observation until it regained strength. After receiving medical care and nutritional support, the bird was deemed fit for release and was set free in Asola-Bhati Wildlife Sanctuary.

Kartick Satyanarayan, co-founder and CEO of Wildlife SOS, emphasized the dangers birds of prey face in urban environments, noting that many sustain injuries due to collisions with buildings and man-made hazards. “This underscores the im-



portance of timely intervention,” he said. Geeta Seshamani, co-founder and secretary of Wildlife SOS, praised the security staff for their quick response, stating that their prompt action was instrumental in saving the bird’s life. She added that Wildlife SOS remains committed to rescuing and rehabilitating distressed wildlife, fostering coexistence between citizens and native species.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta Inspects Drains, Orders Desilting before Monsoon

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Sunday conducted an inspection of major drains across the city, directing officials to ensure their desilting ahead of the monsoon to prevent waterlogging and sewage overflow.

Accompanied by Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena, Public Works Department Minister Parvesh Verma, and other officials, Gupta criticized previous governments for their negligence in maintaining the drainage system. “These drains were not taken seriously by the previous governments. When big drains like these are not cleaned, it is obvious that sewage will flow out,” she remarked, stressing the urgency of preventive measures before the rains. During her visit to the Sunheri, Barapulla, and Kushak drains, Gupta noted a lack of coordination among agencies responsible for their upkeep. To address this, she announced that the Flood and Irrigation Department will now be solely responsible for desilting and maintaining the drains, with a dedicated plan and budget allocated for the work.

“These drains should be cleaned before the monsoon so they can efficiently carry water during the rains. We must prepare in advance. From today itself, we



have to start a summer action plan and a winter plan to tackle pollution,” she stated. She also emphasized that her government is committed to efficient governance, assigning specific missions to ministers and public works responsibilities to MLAs. Waterlogging has been a persistent issue in Delhi, particularly during past monsoons. The condition of the city’s drainage system was a major talking point in the recent Assembly elections, where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured a decisive victory, ending the Aam Aadmi Party’s (AAP) decade-long rule. The BJP won 48 out of 70 seats, significantly reducing AAP’s presence in the Assembly.

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India, New Zealand Resume free Trade Agreement Talks

under the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), had stalled after nine rounds in 2015.

The announcement comes amid New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon’s four-day visit to India, which began on March 16. The decision was made following a meeting between India’s Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and New Zealand’s Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay.

“The two nations are pleased to announce the launch of negotiations for a comprehensive and mutually beneficial India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA),” the Commerce Ministry stated. The agreement is expected to facilitate trade in goods, services, and investments while strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries.

According to officials, the revived FTA negotiations aim to achieve balanced trade outcomes, improve market access, and enhance supply chain integration. Both nations are keen on addressing previous concerns and ensuring the agreement benefits businesses and consumers on both sides.

New Zealand has been seeking greater access to India’s fast-growing market, particularly in dairy and agricultural products. Meanwhile, India is interested in expanding trade opportunities for its IT, pharmaceuticals, and engineering sectors in the New Zealand market. With the resumption of talks, both countries hope to finalize a framework that aligns with their economic interests and strengthens bilateral trade relations.

Can Lokpal probe complaints against HC judges? SC to hear case on March 18

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Supreme Court is set to hear a suo motu proceeding on March 18 regarding the Lokpal’s authority to entertain complaints against sitting high court judges. The case follows the top court’s stay on the Lokpal’s January 27 order, which had taken up complaints against an additional judge of a high court. A three-judge bench comprising Justices B R Gavai, Surya Kant, and Abhay S Oka will hear the matter. The Supreme Court had previously observed that the issue was “very, very disturbing” as it directly concerns judicial independence. During the February 20 hearing, the apex court stayed the Lokpal order and sought responses from the Cen-



tre, the Lokpal registrar, and the complainant. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, argued that high court judges do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013. The case stems from two complaints alleging that the high court judge in-

fluenced an additional district judge and another judge of the same high court in a case involving a private company. The complainant claimed the judge had previously represented the company as an advocate.

On January 27, the Lokpal, led by Justice A M Khanwilkar, ordered that the complaints and relevant materials be forwarded to the Chief Justice of India for consideration. The Lokpal deferred further proceedings for four weeks, pending guidance from the CJI, while main-

taining that high court judges fall within the ambit of Section 14 of the 2013 Act.

The Supreme Court’s upcoming hearing will clarify whether the Lokpal has jurisdiction over sitting high court judges and its implications for judicial independence.

Delhi BJP to undergo organisational reshuffling



- Restructuring to take place under 'Sangathan Parv' this week.
- Senior leader Mahendra Nagpal appointed as election officer.
- Elections to be held at booth, Mandal, district, and state levels.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi BJP is set for an organisational reshuffling a month after its victory in the Assembly polls, with the restructuring process to be conducted under the banner of 'Sangathan Parv' this week, party leaders said on Sunday. Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva, who led the party in the elections, stated that the national leadership has appointed senior leader Mahendra Nagpal as the election officer for Delhi. Additionally, Yogesh Atrey and Vijay Solanki have been designated as co-election officers to oversee the process. Sachdeva emphasized that the BJP functions through collective leadership, ensuring internal democracy by providing opportunities for every worker to be part of the organisational framework. The elections will be conducted across all levels, including booth, Mandal, district, and state committees. Sources within the party revealed that the reshuffling is aimed at strengthening the BJP's grassroots structure ahead of upcoming municipal and Lok Sabha elections. The restructuring will also focus on bringing in new leadership at various levels while recognizing the contributions of senior and experienced members.

A senior party leader stated that the BJP is looking to reward dedicated workers who played a crucial role in the Assembly election victory. The selection process will emphasize size merit, commitment to party ideology, and effectiveness in mobilizing support at the grassroots level. Party insiders also indicated that the restructuring will align with the central leadership's broader strategy to maintain the party's momentum in Delhi, especially after forming the government. The BJP is expected to introduce younger leaders and women candidates to key roles in its organizational structure to ensure better representation and outreach. Meanwhile, a senior BJP functionary said that special focus will be given to strengthening Mandal and booth-level units, as these form the backbone of the party's electoral machinery. Training sessions and workshops will be conducted to equip new appointees with necessary leadership skills and knowledge of party strategies. The organisational elections are expected to conclude within the next few weeks, paving the way for a more robust and dynamic leadership team that will work towards consolidating BJP's position in the capital.

Parvesh Verma Pays Tribute to Father on his Birth Anniversary



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi Minister Parvesh Verma on Saturday paid homage to his father, former Delhi Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma, on his 82nd birth anniversary. He pledged to complete his father's unfinished developmental work in the

national capital, emphasizing that the BJP government had laid the foundation for Delhi's progress three decades ago. "Development work in Delhi started 30 years ago during the BJP government. Since then, only politics has taken

place in the city. We are committed to making Viksit Delhi and will complete his unfinished work," Verma said. The event was attended by Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, along with ministers Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Ashish Sood, and other senior BJP leaders who offered floral tributes to Sahib Singh Verma. Earlier in the day, Parvesh Verma also performed a havan in his father's memory. MCD Honors Sahib Singh Verma's Contributions The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) also marked the occasion by acknowledging Sahib Singh Verma's contributions to the city's development and governance. A tribute event was held at Kakrola Park in Najafgarh, attended by local councillor Sudesh Kumar and senior MCD officials. Officials praised Verma's tenure as Chief Minister from 1996 to 1998, highlighting his efforts in infrastructure development, education reforms, and strengthening the BJP's influence in Delhi. His contributions to rural development and governance continue to be remembered.

Digital Competition Law needed, but best Practices must be Studied

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The government is committed to introducing a new law to ensure fair competition in digital markets, but further discussions are necessary to adapt global best practices to India's market conditions, Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Harsh Malhotra said on Sunday. Speaking at a national conference on economics and competition law organized by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) in the capital, the minister highlighted that around 100 suggestions have been received on the draft Digital Competition Bill, which was released for public feedback. He emphasized that while the Competition Act was amended in 2023 to promote fair competition, a separate law for digital competition is essential to prevent global firms from engaging in anti-competitive practices, protect smaller Indian players from being dominated by larger firms, and maintain market fairness. The minister noted that discussions on digital competition are ongoing across various ministries, including the Ministry of Electronics, which

is expected to submit a report on the subject. He stated that the government is carefully examining digital market regulations in countries like Japan, Australia, and the European Union to identify the best approach for India. "We are not in a hurry, but after a due process, the government wants to bring in a bill to the extent required," Malhotra said. The proposed legislation includes ex-ante or forward-looking regulations that outline a set of rules for large digital firms to prevent market distortions. The need for such regulations arises from the limitations of the current system, where companies are penalized only after an anti-competitive practice is proven, which may not be effective in the rapidly evolving digital economy. CCI Chairperson Ravneet Kaur high-

lighted that the growing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) in markets poses a risk of collusion without human intervention. She pointed out that AI-driven price coordination and algorithmic discrimination under dynamic pricing models could create unfair market conditions. "Regulators need to be ahead of this technology adoption and its implications for competition. One of the mechanisms we use for that is market studies," Kaur stated. Over the past 15 years, the CCI has examined around 1,300 anti-trust cases, disposing of 1,180 of them. In 2024, 42 new anti-trust cases were presented before the commission, with prima facie violations found in eight cases, leading to detailed investigations. Kaur assured that all cases received last year have been reviewed, with decisions either taken or additional information sought where necessary. The Digital Competition Bill is expected to play a crucial role in balancing market growth with fair competition, ensuring that emerging Indian firms are not stifled by dominant global players while promoting a regulatory environment suited to the digital economy.



CM Rekha Gupta engages with rural Delhi farmers for budget inputs

CM Gupta assures solutions in the upcoming 'Viksit Delhi' budget.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta met farmers' representatives on Saturday to gather inputs for the upcoming Delhi Budget, addressing concerns ranging from tax exemptions to infrastructure improvements. The meeting, held at the Delhi Secretariat, was part of a broader public consultation ahead of the budget presentation scheduled for March 25. Farmers, led by Chaudhary Surender Solanki of Sakal Panchayat Palam 360, urged the government to announce long-pending house tax exemptions in Lal Dora and extended Lal Dora areas. They also requested an increase in land circle rates to ₹5 crore



per acre and the introduction of free ownership rights for heirs of ancestral properties. Additionally, they sought alternative plots for those whose lands were acquired by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA). CM Gupta emphasized that farmers play a crucial role not only in food production but also in maintaining Delhi's green cover. She assured that rural concerns such as improved sanitation, modern irrigation methods, expan-

sion of Lal Dora, and access to central government schemes would be addressed in the budget. The government is also considering a revised land policy and the development of smart villages. Farmers raised critical issues affecting both urbanized and rural villages. Urban areas struggle with unclean sewer lines, water supply issues, and inadequate healthcare, while rural regions face poor road infrastructure, lack of sanitation, and absence of public transport. The budget session of the Delhi Assembly is set to begin on March 24 and will continue till March 28. This will be the first budget of the BJP-led government, which took office in February.

Assam Congress spokesperson Reetam Singh arrested



TPN Correspondent | Guwahati

Assam Congress spokesperson Reetam Singh was arrested on Saturday after he refused to cooperate with the police in connection with his controversial social media comments against BJP MLA Manab Deka. The arrest came after hours of high drama as Singh locked himself inside his house and demanded a court order before surrendering. Singh was taken into custody following a complaint filed

by Manab Deka's wife, who accused him of making defamatory remarks against her husband and his family. Singh had referred to Deka as a "rapist" in a post on X on March 13, while commenting on a news report about a separate rape case in Dhemaji district. A team of Lakhimpur Police, accompanied by Guwahati Police, arrived at Singh's residence to arrest him, but he refused to open the door, claiming that the police had no warrant. Throughout the day, Singh posted multiple tweets, alleging that his arrest would be unlawful under a recent Gauhati High Court ruling. "A team of Lakhimpur Police is here to apprehend me without a warrant and notice. Any arrest of mine without legal

procedures will be contempt of court," Singh wrote on X. The Congress party soon intervened, and MP Gaurav Gogoi visited Singh's residence. However, as soon as Singh opened the door for Gogoi, the waiting police team moved in and arrested him. Video footage from the scene showed Singh resisting arrest, forcing the police to drag him to their vehicle before transferring him to Lakhimpur, where the case is registered. This is not the first time Singh has been arrested. In April last year, he was detained for sharing a doctored video of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, falsely claiming that the BJP planned to end reservations for SCs, STs, and OBCs if it won the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Govt hospitals to provide free dialysis: Delhi Health Minister

Economically weaker sections to be prioritised for quality treatment.



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi government is set to introduce free dialysis services at all state-run hospitals under the Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme, Health Minister Dr Pankaj Singh announced on World Kidney Day. Speaking at an event, Dr Singh reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening healthcare infrastructure under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the guidance of Chief Minister Rekha Gupta. He emphasized that the initiative would ensure free-of-cost dialysis treatment, benefiting those who rely on government hospitals. The minister also highlighted that economically weaker sections would be given priority in

receiving quality dialysis treatment. He urged medical practitioners to maintain professionalism and compassion while treating patients, fostering a more welcoming and supportive hospital environment. Dr Singh warned about the increasing prevalence of kidney diseases, attributing the rise to high blood sugar, hypertension, obesity, and lifestyle choices. He stressed that early detection and lifestyle modifications could significantly reduce the risk of chronic kidney disease (CKD). A study published in The Indian Journal of Nephrology revealed that CKD is particularly severe in rural areas, affecting 15.34% of the population compared to 10.65% in urban regions.

Delhi's Ghaziabad Namo Bharat station to get Metro Desk

- NCRTC to introduce co-working space at Ghaziabad Namo Bharat Station.
- Features include private cabins, meeting rooms, and high-speed internet.
- Smart technology integration for seamless access and operations.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) is set to launch "Metro Desk," a co-working space at Ghaziabad Namo Bharat Station, transforming transit hubs into business-friendly workspaces. This initiative aims to provide professionals, entrepreneurs, and small businesses with a well-connected and productive environment. Located in the station's concourse area, Metro Desk will feature 42 open workstations, 11 private cabins, and 2 meeting rooms, accommodating up to 42 individuals and 11 companies at a time. High-speed internet and plug-and-play workstations will ensure seamless productivity, according to an NCRTC official. The station's strategic location along the Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor, near Meerut Tiraha Mor and the Shaheed Sthal Delhi Met-

ro Station, makes it an ideal spot for working professionals. The setup will also include biometric entry, digital key cards, IoT-enabled smart lighting, climate control, and automated meeting room scheduling. Professionals using the space will benefit from video conferencing facilities, wireless screen sharing, and QR-based services for hot desks and vending machines. A dedicated digital platform will manage reservations, memberships, and cashless transactions, enhancing convenience. The co-working space offers an affordable alternative to traditional office setups, catering to startups, small businesses, and remote professionals looking for a cost-effective yet professional environment. It is also expected to foster collaboration and networking among users.



Delhi's new EV policy proposes mandatory electric third car, bans fossil fuel two-wheelers by 2026

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi government has proposed a major shift towards electric vehicles (EVs) under its Electric Vehicles Policy 2.0, aiming for a near-total transition to clean energy transportation by 2030. A key provision of the new policy requires that the third private car purchased by any household must be an EV. The policy also proposes strict deadlines for phasing out fossil fuel-based vehicles. From August 2026, no petrol, diesel, or CNG-run two-wheelers will be registered in the capital. Similarly, from August 2025, new registrations of CNG autorickshaws and three-wheeler goods carriers will be stopped, and existing CNG autos older than 10 years will have to be replaced or retrofitted with electric alternatives. The policy further mandates that all garbage collection vehicles under the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Delhi Jal Board (DJB), and other civic bodies be fully electrified by 2027. Delhi Transport Minister Pankaj Kumar Singh has approved the proposal in principle, and it is now set to be presented before the cabinet. Officials said the policy's four key objectives are tackling air pollution, creating employment in the EV sector, strengthening energy security, and ensuring an affordable

and fair transition to electric mobility. The government also aims to set up over 13,200 charging stations across the city, ensuring access within every five kilometers. However, a previous goal of installing 48,000 charging points by 2026 remains largely unfulfilled, with only 10% achieved so far. The policy sets ambitious targets, aiming for 95% of all new vehicle registrations to be electric by 2027 and 98% by 2030. In contrast, the previous EV policy aimed for 25% by 2024 but managed only around 13-14%. Experts have praised the policy for its

progressive approach, with Amit Bhatt, Managing Director (India) of the International Council of Clean Transport (ICCT), calling it a potential model for other states. However, he emphasized the need for a clearer phase-out plan for internal combustion engine (ICE) cars, similar to the measures taken for two-wheelers and three-wheelers. With the government's steady procurement of electric buses and a push towards full electrification in its vehicle fleet, Delhi's transport sector is set to undergo a major transformation in the coming years.



Two held for killing man in road rage in Delhi



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Two men were arrested for allegedly killing a man in a suspected road rage incident on Holi in East Delhi's Kalyanpuri, police said on Saturday. The attack occurred on Friday when two bike-borne men assaulted a man before fleeing towards Raj Nagar in Ghaziabad. The victim, Ashish, was taken to Max Hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Eyewitness Vikas stated that he and his friends, including Ashish, were heading home

to Khoda after Holi celebrations when the attack took place. As they crossed the NH-24 cut, two men on a motorcycle from Mandawali collided with their bike, leading to an argument. One of the assailants then took out a liquor bottle, struck Ashish on the head, and used the broken glass to stab him in the neck, a senior officer said. Following the incident, four police teams were formed to track the suspects. CCTV footage helped trace their route, leading to their arrest. The investigation is ongoing.

Delhi records AQI of 85, cleanest air in three years for January-March period

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi recorded an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 85 on Saturday, marking the first time in five years that the city has witnessed a day of 'satisfactory' air quality in March. The reading, the lowest between January 1 and March 15 in the last three years, comes after light rainfall across Delhi-NCR helped clear pollutants from the air. This is the first day in 2025 when Delhi's AQI has fallen into the 'satisfactory' category, meaning it remains between 50 and 100. The improvement prompted the

Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) to revoke Stage I restrictions of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in the capital and surrounding cities. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Delhi is likely to experience very light to light rainfall on March 16, with maximum and minimum temperatures expected to range between 30-32°C and 16-18°C, respectively. On Friday evening, parts of South Delhi received light rain, while the sky remained overcast, bringing temporary relief from rising temperatures.



Three boys held for abducting teen in South Delhi, demanded ₹50K ransom

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Three boys were apprehended on Wednesday for allegedly kidnapping a 17-year-old boy in South Delhi's Mehrauli and demanding a ₹50,000 ransom, police said. The incident took place on Tuesday, and the accused lured the victim by posing as a girl on social media. According to Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Achin Garg, the police received a call around 6 PM on Tuesday from a man reporting that his 17-year-old cousin

had been kidnapped. The victim had gone to meet a girl he connected with online near Saket Metro Station but was forcibly taken by three boys on a scooter. His friend, who had accompanied him, alerted the family about the abduction. Acting swiftly, police registered a case of kidnapping and used digital tracking methods to trace the suspects to a forested area in Tughlakabad. The accused were caught, and the victim was rescued safely. Investigations revealed that one of the accused planned the kidnapping

to clear pending scooter installments for a delivery job. He had created a fake social media profile under a female identity, amassing over 30,000 followers to trick victims. The abductors had hoped to extort money from the boy's family but were caught before they could execute their plan. All three suspects, belonging to slum clusters in South Delhi, were produced before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) and sent to observation homes. Their exact ages are being verified, police said.

PM Modi on Pakistan, Proxy War, and Diplomacy in Lex Fridman Podcast

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a widely watched podcast hosted by Lex Fridman, revisited his 2014 decision to invite then-Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif to his oath-taking ceremony. He described it as an unprecedented diplomatic move aimed at fostering goodwill. Speaking about India's historical ties with Pakistan, PM Modi highlighted how both nations fought together for independence but later parted ways

due to the partition. He recalled the tragic aftermath, citing the bloodshed that followed and Pakistan's continued hostility. Referring to Pakistan's track record on terrorism, he pointed out that the roots of global terror often trace back to the country, mentioning Osama bin Laden's shelter in Pakistan. "Terrorism and the terrorist mindset are deeply rooted in Pakistan. It stands as an epicenter of turmoil, not just for India, but for the world," he said.

PM Modi emphasized India's consistent efforts to encourage Pakistan toward peace, but noted that such attempts were met with hostility and betrayal. "We sincerely hope wisdom prevails and they choose the path of peace. Even the people of Pakistan must be weary of living in strife," he added. The podcast, recorded in Hindi and English, has been shared globally with multilingual subtitles, underscoring its widespread appeal.



Samay Raina's Delhi shows cancelled amid 'India's Got Latent' controversy



- Samay Raina's 'Unfiltered' shows at Talkatora Stadium on March 21 and 23 cancelled.
- The cancellation follows backlash over remarks made on 'India's Got Latent' episode.
- No official reason given, but refunds are being processed.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Comedian Samay Raina's upcoming shows at Delhi's Talkatora Stadium on March 21 and 23 have been cancelled amid the ongoing controversy surrounding his online show, India's Got Latent. Ticketing platform BookMyShow, which had marked both shows as sold out, informed attendees of the cancellation via message on Saturday, confirming that refunds would be processed within 7 to 10 working days. The reason for the cancellation has not been officially disclosed by BookMyShow or Raina himself. This development follows the cancellation of Raina's Gujarat shows scheduled for April, which were also scrapped in the wake of backlash over controver-

sial remarks made on India's Got Latent. The controversy erupted after an episode of India's Got Latent featuring podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia, YouTuber Ashish Chanchalani, and content creator Apoorva Mukhija, known as 'The Rebel Kid', sparked outrage. Allahbadia's comments on parents and sex drew widespread criticism and multiple police complaints, leading to legal scrutiny. The Supreme Court recently slammed the content of the episode, calling the remarks perverse. While granting Allahbadia interim protection, the court also directed him to join the investigation. Raina and other participants of the show continue to face backlash over the incident, with its impact now affecting his live performances.

6-Year-Old Girl Crushed to Death by Drunk Driver in Surat



TPN Correspondent | Surat

A tragic incident in Surat claimed the life of a 6-year-old girl after a drunk driver crashed into a gated society's main entrance, causing the gate to fall on her. The girl, the daughter of a security guard, was playing with her friends when the accident occurred. CCTV footage captured the horrifying moment when the driver, behind the wheel of a Hyundai i20, first hit the gate, trapping the girl underneath. Shockingly, instead of stopping, he ran over

her. Nearby residents rushed to lift the gate, but she had already succumbed to her injuries on the spot. The police have arrested the accused and seized the vehicle. This incident has sparked renewed outrage over reckless driving, especially in the wake of the Vadodara accident, where a 20-year-old law student, Rakshit Chaurasia, fatally crashed into two-wheelers before arrogantly exclaiming, "another round."

IIT Dhanbad Students Injured as Vehicle Falls Into Gorge in Sikkim



TPN Correspondent | Gangtok

A tragic accident in Sikkim's Mangan district left 10 students from IIT (ISM) Dhanbad injured after their vehicle fell into a 100-foot-deep gorge on Saturday night. The incident took place near Pakshep in Forest Dara around 9:30 pm while the students were traveling from Lachung to Gangtok. According to police, the driv-

er lost control of the vehicle, leading to the crash. He was also injured in the accident. Among the injured students, four were female. Three of the victims, who suffered serious injuries, were rushed to a hospital in Gangtok for advanced treatment, while the rest were treated in Mangan. Authorities are investigating the cause of the accident, and rescue efforts were promptly carried out to assist the injured.

Bihar Cop, Who "Danced" After Tej Pratap Yadav's Order, Removed From His Security

TPN Correspondent | Patna

A police constable assigned to RJD leader Tej Pratap Yadav's security was removed from his duty on Sunday after he was seen dancing in uniform during Holi celebrations at the leader's residence. The constable, identified as Deepak Kumar, was transferred to the police lines with immediate effect. "Constable Deepak Kumar, posted as security guard of MLA Tej Pratap, is sent to police lines for dancing in uniform. He will be replaced by another constable in the MLA's security," read an official statement from the Senior Superintendent of Police's (SSP) office. The controversy erupted after a viral video showed Yadav, seated on a sofa with a microphone, ordering Kumar to per-

form a 'thumka' (dance move) or face suspension. "Ae sipahi, ae Deepak, abhi ek gana bajaenge jis par tumko thumka lagana padega. Nahin lagaoge to tumko suspend kar denge. Bura na maano Holi hai," Yadav can be heard saying before a devotional Holi song starts playing. Though the policeman did not perform the specific dance move, he did raise his arm and hop a few times in response.



The Hasanpur MLA, son of former Bihar chief ministers Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri Devi, also engaged in Holi revelry similar to his father's infamous 'kapda faad Holi' by tearing off supporters' clothes. He was later seen riding a scooter on the streets while shouting "Happy Holi Paltu Chacha," a remark seemingly aimed at Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. Following the scooter ride, Patna Traffic Police fined the vehicle's owner ₹4,000 for multiple violations, including riding without a helmet, lacking a Pollution Under Control Certificate (PUC), and not having valid insurance. "Challans of ₹4,000 have been issued to the owner of the vehicle," said Patna Traffic SP Aprajit Lohan.

Vadodara Crash Claims Woman's Life, Husband

Critical After Speeding Car Hits Scooter



TPN Correspondent | Vadodara

A tragic road accident in Vadodara claimed the life of 35-year-old Hemali Patel, leaving her husband Purav Patel critically injured. The couple, along with their daughter, was out on a scooter after Holika Dahan when a speeding car rammed into them in the Karelibaug area. The crash left five others injured, including their daughter.

The car, driven by law student Rakshit Chaurasia, also hit two other vehicles before coming to a halt. Eyewitnesses claim that Rakshit appeared intoxicated, with a viral video showing him stepping out of the car and shouting incoherent words like "another round," "Nikita," and "Om Namah Shivay." A furious crowd assaulted him before the police intervened. Rakshit, a businessman's son from Prayagraj, has been charged with cul-

pable homicide not amounting to murder. His co-passenger, Pranshu Chouhan, is currently missing, and police are searching for him.

Driver's Defense and Eyewitness Accounts

Rakshit denies being drunk or speeding, claiming the crash happened due to an airbag malfunction. "We were overtaking a scooter and turned right. There was a pothole, and the car touched another vehicle, causing the airbag to deploy and obstruct our vision," he told the media. He expressed regret, saying, "I was told that one woman has died, and a few others are injured. I want to meet the victims' family—it is my fault." However, survivors of the accident dispute his claim. Vikas Kevlani, who was injured in the crash, insists the car was moving at high speed. "We were on two-wheelers when the speeding car rear-ended us," he said, adding that he was out with his siblings and neighbors after Holika Dahan. Vikas also stressed the need for stricter punishments to deter reckless driving. "Fines are not a solution. Strict action is needed for them to understand the consequences," he said, vowing to seek justice for Hemali Patel.

7 Years Jail, Rs 10 Lakh Fine

What Does Immigration Bill Propose?

- Strict penalties for using fake passports, visas, or illegal entry into India.
- Mandatory reporting of foreigners by hotels, universities, and hospitals.
- Repeals four existing laws to simplify immigration regulations.



THE POINT DESK

The Immigration and Foreigners Bill, 2025, introduced by the Union Home Ministry in the Lok Sabha on March 11, proposes stringent measures to regulate immigration, track foreign nationals, and enhance security protocols. If passed, the legislation will replace multiple existing laws and introduce strict penalties for violations, including up to seven years of imprisonment and a fine of ₹10 lakh for those using forged passports or visas. According to the bill, any individual found guilty of knowingly using a forged or fraudulently obtained passport, visa, or other travel documents for entering, staying, or exiting India will face a prison term ranging from two to seven years. Additionally, the offender will be liable to pay a fine between ₹1 lakh and ₹10 lakh. Foreign nationals entering Indian territory without valid documents, including visas, could face a jail term of up to five years and a fine of ₹5 lakh. The proposed legislation also introduces mandatory reporting of information about foreigners by institutions such as hotels, universities, educational institutions, hospitals, and nursing homes. This provision aims to track overstaying foreigners and ensure compliance with immigration laws. Furthermore, all international airlines and ships must submit advance passenger and crew details before arriving at Indian ports or airports.

The bill also grants the Centre the power to regulate areas frequented by foreigners, with the authority to restrict or close premises, impose specific conditions for their use, or refuse entry to particular categories of foreigners. This measure is expected to strengthen national security while allowing the government to monitor the movement of foreign nationals within the country. **Repeal of Four Existing Laws** The bill aims to replace four outdated laws that currently govern immigration and foreign nationals in India, namely the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939, the Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Immigration (Carriers' Liability) Act, 2000. By consolidating these laws into a single framework, the government seeks to streamline immigration regulations, enhance enforcement mechanisms, and reduce compliance burdens while ensuring national security and efficient tracking of foreign nationals. By consolidating these acts into a single framework, the government aims to simplify immigration laws, reduce compliance burdens, and modernize the immigration process to meet present-day requirements. The bill also aligns with the Centre's policy of ease of doing business and streamlining regulations. **Visa Regulations and Compliance** While Indian visas continue to be issued in physical or sticker form by Indian missions abroad, the Bureau of Immigration (BoI) grants electronic visas in

seven categories to travelers from 167 countries. Visa-on-arrival is available at six designated airports for nationals of Japan, South Korea, and the UAE (under specific conditions). Additionally, all foreign nationals staying in India for more than 180 days on student, medical, research, employment, missionary, or project visas must register with the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer (FRRO) or Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) within 14 days of arrival. Pakistani nationals are required to register within 24 hours of arrival. **Impact on National Security and Economy** An official from the Home Ministry stated that the bill will help tackle illegal migration, track overstaying foreigners, and enhance national security. However, it does not deal with issues related to the grant of Indian citizenship, which is governed by the Citizenship Act, 1955. Foreigners visiting India also require special permits to travel to certain restricted areas, including parts of the northeastern states, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan. As per Home Ministry data, 98.40 lakh foreigners visited India between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024. The new bill aims to ensure better regulation of their entry, stay, and movement, balancing national security with economic and tourism interests.

Pakistan's Fire of Terrorism Is Now Burning Itself



THE POINT DESK

Pakistan has long played with the fire of terrorism, using extremist groups as strategic tools. Now, that same fire is consuming the country from within. The recent train hijacking in Balochistan and the continued attacks by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) expose the reality—Pakistan's own creations have turned against it, and the state is proving incapable of handling the crisis. The hijacking of the Jaffar Express by Baloch rebels, which led to a deadly standoff, highlighted the incompetence of the Pakistani army. The Baloch fighters, vastly outgunned and outnumbered, successfully held hostages and inflicted heavy casualties on the army. Despite claiming a swift operation, Pakistan's military has failed to provide credible evidence of victory, while the rebels maintain that over 100 soldiers were killed. This incident is not isolated but a symptom of Pakistan's deepening security crisis. Beyond Balochistan, the country is facing relentless attacks from the TTP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and rising sectarian violence. Shia-Sunni clashes in Kurram have made roads impassable for months, while Pakistani forces struggle to contain the insurgency in North Waziristan and Bajaur. Taliban fighters continue to strike Pakistani border forces, exposing the army's inability to secure even its own territory. These failures make it clear that the Pakistan Army, once feared for its iron grip, is now a force struggling to maintain control. The reason for this chaos is simple—Pakistan's decades-long policy of using terrorism as a weapon has backfired. The country has funded, trained, and sheltered extremist groups, hoping to use them against India and Afghanistan. The same groups have now turned against their masters. Even China, Pakistan's closest ally, has suffered in Balochistan, where repeated attacks on Chinese workers have frustrated Beijing. At one point, China even considered sending its own troops to protect its interests, a major embarrassment for Pakistan's military. Pakistan's response to these internal crises has been predictable—it blames India and Afghanistan. Whenever there is a terrorist attack or military failure, Pakistan's government accuses foreign powers to distract from its own incompetence. After the Jaffar Express attack, Pakistan once again pointed fingers at India, despite having no evidence. However, both India and Afghanistan dismissed these accusations outright, with India reminding the world that Pakistan remains the true hub of terrorism. Despite its nuclear arsenal, Pakistan has repeatedly failed in direct conflicts. The country has lost wars in 1948, 1965, 1971, and suffered humiliation in the 1999 Kargil conflict. Instead of learning from these failures, it has relied on proxy wars, supporting terrorism in Kashmir and Punjab. However, those strategies have now collapsed, leaving Pakistan struggling to control its own extremists. Pakistan's deep-rooted military control over civilian politics worsens the situation. The army has ruled for half of Pakistan's existence and continues to manipulate leaders like puppets. When Prime Ministers like Nawaz Sharif or Imran Khan challenge military dominance, they are swiftly removed. This lack of democratic stability has left Pakistan without a credible leadership capable of tackling its internal crises.

Nepal Sees Surging Popular Support For Former King — Will Monarchy Make A Comeback?

THE POINT DESK

Growing public support for Nepal's former King Gyanendra has unsettled the country's political establishment, with massive crowds gathering to welcome him across various regions. His recent visit to Kathmandu on March 9 witnessed an estimated 40,000 supporters at the Tribhuvan International Airport, with tens of thousands more lining the streets to Nirmal Niwas, his private residence. Over the past three months, King Gyanendra has toured cities like Nepalgunj, Bhairahawa, Pokhara, Syangja, and Myagdi, where he received enthusiastic receptions. The overwhelming response has alarmed Nepal's ruling political parties, particularly the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist) led by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) led by Puspa Kamal Dahal. Even the largest opposition party, the Nepali Congress (NC), is wary of the growing influence of pro-monarchy forces. King Gyanendra's resurgence is backed by the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and its ally, the Rashtriya Prajatantra Party-Nepal (RPP-N), both of which advocate for the reinstatement of Nepal as a Hindu state and a constitutional monarchy. Their nationwide rallies have drawn significant public support, leading to



heated discussions in Parliament. The Maoist Centre was even compelled to suspend its campaign in the Tarai-Madhes region, acknowledging the growing traction of royalist sentiment. The former monarch further fueled political debate with a video address on 'Democracy Day' (February 18), where he criticized Nepal's current leadership, lamenting the nation's deteriorating economy, rising debt, and failing institutions. He warned against erasing Nepal's history and called for a return to traditional values. "We cannot move forward by dishonoring our identity," Gyanendra declared,

urging citizens to join him in safeguarding the country's unity and prosperity. Adding to the controversy, the former king's January visit to India—where he met Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath—has raised concerns among Nepal's leaders. The meeting highlighted the close ties between Nepal's monarchy and Hindu nationalist movements in India. Posters of Adityanath were even displayed at pro-monarchy rallies in Kathmandu, drawing criticism from Prime Minister Oli and other communist leaders. Reacting to the growing royalist sentiment, PM

Oli challenged King Gyanendra to enter politics formally. "If you believe you have support, form a party and contest elections instead of playing hide and seek," he remarked. Maoist leader Dahal echoed this, attributing the monarch's popularity to government mismanagement and alleged foreign influences. The NC, meanwhile, has adopted a more cautious approach. Its leader Sher Bahadur Deuba blamed King Gyanendra's past actions for Nepal's transition to a republic, recalling his crackdown on political dissent before the monarchy's abolition in 2007. Disillusionment with Nepal's political parties has been a key factor in the rising support for monarchy. Since becoming a federal democratic republic in 2008, the country has witnessed 14 different governments in 17 years, leading to political instability and widespread corruption. Economic decline, brain drain, and rising inflation have deepened public frustration. Many citizens believe that Nepal's political leaders, particularly Oli and Dahal, have prioritized power struggles over governance, fueling nostalgia for the monarchy's perceived stability. Even the relatively new Rashtriya Swatantra Party (RSP), once seen as a fresh alternative, has been tainted by corruption scandals, including the arrest of its leader Rabi Lamichhane in 2023.



PM Modi hails RBI for winning Digital Transformation Award 2025

- RBI wins UK's Digital Transformation Award 2025 by Central Banking.
- PM Modi calls it a 'commendable accomplishment' in digital innovation.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday praised the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for winning the UK's Digital Transformation Award 2025 by Central Banking, calling it a commendable accomplishment in governance and digital innovation.

Taking to social media platform X, PM Modi congratulated the RBI and highlighted its efforts in modernizing India's financial ecosystem. "A commendable accomplishment, reflecting an emphasis on innovation and efficiency in governance," he wrote. He further noted that digital innovations like these are playing a crucial role in strengthening India's financial system and empowering countless lives.

The RBI was selected for the prestigious award on March 14 in London, UK, in recognition of its in-house digital initiatives—Pravaah and Sarthi. The central bank announced the achievement on X, stating that these initiatives have significantly enhanced its digital transformation efforts.

Pravaah, launched in May 2024, is a digital portal designed for external users to submit regulatory applications to the banking regulator, streamlining interactions with the RBI. The Sarthi system, on the other hand, is an internal digital initiative aimed at digitizing workflows within the organization for improved efficiency.

The Digital Transformation Award is an acknowledgment of RBI's efforts to enhance operational efficiency and innovation, further solidifying India's position as a leader in digital financial governance.



Massive Fire at Madhya Pradesh Hospital, Over 190 Patients Rescued

TPN Correspondent | Gwalior

A massive fire erupted at the Kamla Raja Hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior city early Sunday, triggering a large-scale evacuation of patients. More than 190 people, including 13 ICU patients, were safely rescued and shifted to another hospital, officials confirmed.

The fire broke out around 1 a.m. in an air-conditioner inside the ICU of the hospital's gynecology department. Gwalior Collector Ruchika Chouhan stated that hospital staff, including guards and ward boys, acted swiftly to evacuate patients, breaking windows to facilitate the rescue operation.

While no casualties were reported, the incident caused panic as thick smoke filled the premises. An attendant of a patient described the chaos, stating that visibility was almost zero due to the smoke, but hospital staff ensured the safe transfer of all patients.

According to an official release from the state's Public Relations Department, a short circuit is suspected to have caused the fire. Fire tenders from the Gwalior Municipal Corporation managed to bring the blaze under control. Authorities have launched a probe to determine the exact cause of the incident.

"Not Everything Is Always Perfect": PM Modi on India-China Ties

- PM Modi discusses India-China relations on the Lex Fridman Podcast.
- Stresses dialogue over discord, cooperation over conflict.
- Mentions progress in restoring normalcy at the LAC.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized the importance of maintaining stable relations with China despite past tensions, advocating for dialogue over discord and cooperation over conflict. Speaking on the Lex Fridman Podcast, he highlighted the historical ties between India and China and the need for mutual understanding.

PM Modi stated that India and China, as ancient civilizations, have always learned from and influenced each other. He pointed out that at one point in history, both nations contributed to more than half of the world's GDP. He also acknowledged Buddhism's role in strengthening cultural ties between the two countries.

While addressing the long-standing



border disputes, PM Modi acknowledged the 2020 clashes along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and the resulting tensions. He noted that after his recent meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, normalcy has started returning to the border. In November last year, both nations resumed patrolling in eastern Lada-

kh after a gap of over four years. "It is true that border disputes have existed, and 2020 was a difficult year for our ties. However, we are now working to restore conditions to how they were be-

fore 2020. Trust, enthusiasm, and energy will return, but it will take time," PM Modi said.

The Prime Minister reiterated that differences between nations are natural, just like in families. However, his government is focused on ensuring these differences do not escalate into disputes. "Instead of discord, we emphasize dialogue, because only through dialogue can we build a stable, cooperative relationship that serves the best interests of both nations," he added.

India and China completed their disengagement process in eastern Ladakh's Depsang and Demchok areas late last year. This was followed by discussions between PM Modi and President Xi in Kazan on October 23, where they agreed to revive diplomatic dialogue mechanisms to improve relations.



"Jo Karega Jaat Ki Baat...": Gadkari's Tough Stand Against Caste Politics

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari strongly criticized caste-based politics, declaring that a person's greatness is defined by qualities rather than caste, religion, or gender. Addressing students at the convocation ceremony of Central India Group of Institutions in Nagpur, Gadkari reiterated his stance, stating, "Jo karega jaat ki baat, usko kas ke marunga laot" (I will kick hard anyone who talks about caste).

The senior BJP leader emphasized that he would not compromise on his principles, even if it costs him votes. "My friends told me this stance could lead to setbacks, but I am not concerned. Does anyone die if they lose an election? I will stick to my principles," he said.

Highlighting the importance of education, Gadkari remarked that knowledge not only benefits individuals but also contributes to national development. "Education is power, and acquiring it should be your mission," he told the students.

Despite holding 12 honorary D.Litt degrees, Gadkari stated that he does not use the title 'Dr.' "I couldn't qualify for engineering due to my involvement in anti-Emergency protests in 1975. But knowledge, combined with entrepreneurship, is crucial. My advice to you is: don't be a job seeker, be a job creator," he urged the graduating class. Gadkari's remarks come amid ongoing debates on caste-based politics, reaffirming his position against discrimination based on caste, religion, or gender.

India's Hyperloop Tube to Be World's Longest at 410 Metres



TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced that India's Hyperloop test tube at IIT Madras will soon become the world's longest, measuring 410 meters. The facility is already the longest Hyperloop test site in Asia and represents a major step toward developing high-speed transportation technology in the country.

Hyperloop is a high-speed train that operates in a vacuum within a tube, promising revolutionary advancements in transportation. On March 15, Vaishnaw visited the Hyperloop testing facility at IIT Madras Discovery Campus, where he witnessed a live demonstration. In a social media post on Sunday, he wrote, "Longest Hyperloop tube in Asia (410m)... soon to be the world's longest."

Speaking to journalists, the Minister emphasized that the entire Hyperloop testing system has been developed using indigenous technology. He congratulated young innovators for their contributions and expressed confidence that India will soon be ready for Hyperloop transportation, as test results have been promising.

The Railway Ministry has provided financial funding and technical assistance for the Hyperloop project. The electronics technology required for the system will be developed at ICF Chennai, a facility that has already built large-scale electronics systems for Vande Bharat high-speed trains. The Minister highlighted the expertise of ICF engineers and their capability to deliver advanced technology for the Hyperloop project.

Vaishnaw also visited the IIT Madras campus in Guindy, where he inspected the Open House 2025 exhibition organized by the Center for Innovation. He interacted with students and young innovators, praising their work in data science, artificial intelligence, and semiconductors.

Lashkar Terrorist Abu Qatal Killed in Pakistan by Unknown Assailants

- Abu Qatal, Hafiz Saeed's close aide, shot dead in Pakistan
- Attackers fired 15-20 rounds, killing him and a security guard
- Qatal was behind major attacks in Rajouri and Reasi, charge-sheeted by NIA

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Zia-ur-Rehman, alias Abu Qatal, a close aide of 26/11 mastermind Hafiz Saeed, was shot dead by unidentified assailants in Pakistan, reports claimed on Sunday. Qatal, who was under heavy protection by the Pakistan Army and Lashkar operatives, was traveling with his security guard in the Jhelum area around 7 pm when gunmen opened fire, killing both on the spot and critically injuring another guard.

According to sources, the attackers fired between 15 and 20 rounds in an ambush near

Zeenat Hotel, close to Dina Punjab University in Jhelum. The identity and motive of the attackers remain unknown.

Role in Terror Attacks and NIA Chargesheet
Abu Qatal was a key figure in orchestrating attacks in India, including the 2023 Rajouri attack that killed seven people and the June 9 attack on a bus carrying pilgrims from the Shiv Khori temple in Reasi, which left 10 dead. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) charge-sheeted him in February 2024 for his role in cross-border terrorism.

Originally from Pakistan, Qatal was active in the Poonch-Rajouri region after infiltrating In-



dia in 2002-03. He later returned to Pakistan and remained in contact with local operatives, executing attacks under Hafiz Saeed's direct orders.



Macron Calls for Stronger Pressure on Russia Over Ukraine Ceasefire

TPN Correspondent| Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron has urged Europe and the United States to exert stronger pressure on Russia to accept a ceasefire in Ukraine, stating that Moscow has shown no sincere commitment to peace.

Following a video conference organized by UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Saturday, Macron accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of escalating hostilities and aiming to negotiate only after securing maximum gains. "Russia must respond clearly, and the pressure must be strong to achieve this ceasefire," Macron stated.

With concerns growing over Russia's refusal to engage in the proposed 30-day ceasefire backed by the U.S., Macron warned that President Donald Trump could impose tougher sanctions, shifting the geopolitical balance. He also confirmed that discussions are ongoing regarding a potential multinational peacekeeping force in Ukraine.

Macron is set to meet Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney on Monday and will travel to Berlin on Tuesday for talks with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz ahead of an EU summit.

US, Russia Discuss Next Steps on Ukraine



TPN Correspondent | Washington

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov held a crucial discussion on Saturday regarding the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The conversation comes amid efforts to revive diplomatic talks between Washington and Moscow as part of negotiations hosted by Saudi Arabia.

According to State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce, both diplomats "agreed to continue working towards restoring communication between the United States and Russia." However, the timeline for the next round of talks remains unclear.

Meanwhile, tensions persist on the ground as Kyiv has reportedly agreed in principle to a U.S.-brokered 30-day unconditional ceasefire, provided Moscow halts its attacks in eastern Ukraine. While Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has signaled willingness for the truce, Russian President Vladimir Putin has not yet agreed, setting additional conditions that extend beyond the proposed ceasefire terms.

The diplomatic exchange also included discussions on military developments in the Middle East. Rubio briefed Lavrov about U.S. airstrikes against Houthi rebel positions in Yemen, underscoring Washington's broader security concerns.

The negotiations take place against a backdrop of ongoing hostilities, with both Russia and Ukraine launching aerial attacks in recent days. Ukraine's military reported that Russian forces deployed drones and ballistic missiles targeting key energy infrastructure, resulting in widespread power outages. In response, Ukrainian drones reportedly ignited a fire near an oil refinery in Russia's Volgograd region.



Sudiksha Konanki Case

Missing Student's Clothes Found at Dominican Republic Beach

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Authorities in the Dominican Republic have discovered clothes believed to belong to missing Indian-American student Sudiksha Konanki at a beach near where she was last seen. Images from CDN show a white netted sarong draped over a lounge chair and flip-flops covered in sand, resembling what Konanki was wearing the night she disappeared.

Surveillance footage from March 6 shows Konanki, 20, walking with Joshua Riibe, 22, a senior at Minnesota's St Cloud State University, near the beach around 4:15 am. Law enforcement officials suspect she may have fallen into the ocean and drowned, though they are not ruling out foul play.

Who is Sudiksha Konanki?

Konanki, originally from Virgin-



ia, is a student at the University of Pittsburgh. She had traveled to the RIU Hotel and Resort in Pun-

ta Cana with friends for spring break. Her friends reported her missing around 4 pm on March 6.

Riibe's parents have expressed concern over his detention, claiming he has been held under irregular conditions and interrogated without official translators or legal counsel until March 12. Reports indicate that Riibe has refused to answer investigators' questions. He remains under 24-hour surveillance, with speculation that a superior in the Public Prosecutor's Office could intensify questioning. A spokesperson for the Virginia Sheriff's Office, Thomas Julia, told Fox News Digital that authorities are ensuring a thorough investigation. "We are working closely with the FBI on all aspects of this case, and they are coordinating with the Dominican National Police," he said.

Riibe remains a person of interest but has not been declared a suspect. March 15 marked the eighth day of search operations as authorities continue to investigate Konanki's mysterious disappearance.

Two Indian-origin women inducted into Canada's Cabinet

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Mark Carney, the new Prime Minister of Canada, has included two Indian-origin women in his cabinet—Anita Anand as Minister of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development, and Kamal Khera as Minister of Health. Anita Anand, 58, was born and raised in rural Nova Scotia before moving to Ontario in 1985. She has an extensive background as a scholar, lawyer, and researcher, serving as a Professor of Law at the University of Toronto. Previously, she held key positions in the Canadian government, including President of the Treasury Board, Minister of National Defence, and Minister of Public Services and Procurement. Despite initially stepping back from electoral politics, she reversed her decision on March 1, citing Canada's crucial moment in history.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Anand expressed her commitment to her new role, stating, "We know that negativity won't pay the rent or the mortgage. Negativity won't bring down the price of groceries. Negativity won't win a trade war. We're united and strong and we will immediately get to work, to build the Canada and the Canadian economy of tomorrow."

Meanwhile, 36-year-old Kamal Khera, who



was born in Delhi and moved to Canada during her school years, has retained her position as Minister of Health. A registered nurse by profession, she earned her Bachelor of Science degree from York University, Toronto, and worked in the oncology unit at St. Joseph's Health Centre before entering politics.

First elected as a Member of Parliament for Brampton West in 2015, Khera has held several key roles, including Minister of Seniors

and Parliamentary Secretary for multiple ministries. She reaffirmed her dedication to public service, writing on X, "As a nurse, my top priority is to always be there to support my patients, and that's the same mentality I'll bring every day to the role of Minister of Health. Now, it's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work." With their inclusion in Carney's cabinet, Anand and Khera continue to represent the growing influence of Indian-origin leaders in global politics.

SpaceX Crew Dragon Docks with ISS to Retrieve Sunita Williams, Butch Wilmore

TPN Correspondent | Washington

NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore and Sunita Williams are a step closer to returning home after being stranded aboard the International Space Station (ISS) for over nine months. SpaceX's Crew Dragon successfully docked with the ISS on Sunday at 05:45 GMT, bringing a replacement crew to the orbital outpost.

Wilmore and Williams have been on the ISS since June last year after their Boeing Starliner spacecraft, initially intended for a short test mission, was deemed unfit for return due to propulsion system failures. The malfunction forced NASA to send the Starliner back to Earth unmanned, extending their stay significantly beyond the standard six-month as-



tronaut rotation. Williams described the moment as a "wonderful day," expressing joy at seeing the new crew arrive. Footage shared by NASA astro-

naut Don Pettit showed the Crew Dragon's smooth approach to the station, capturing a crucial step in bringing the stranded astronauts home.

The two astronauts, who had not packed for an extended mission, had to receive additional clothing and personal items over the months. Despite the unexpected circumstances, their stay remains much shorter than NASA astronaut Frank Rubio's record-setting 371-day mission aboard the ISS in 2023 or Russian cosmonaut Valeri Polyakov's world record of 437 days on the Mir space station.

Wilmore and Williams will now prepare for their return journey, scheduled for no earlier than March 19, with an ocean splashdown planned off the Florida coast.

Separatists in Pakistan crash explosive-laden car into bus, kill five paramilitaries

TPN Correspondent | Quetta

At least five paramilitary personnel were killed and over 30 others injured in southwest Pakistan on Sunday after separatists rammed an explosive-laden car into a bus, days after a deadly train attack in Balochistan province.

The attack targeted a convoy of seven buses traveling to Taftan, near the Iranian border, when the vehicle-borne explosion struck at

Noshki. "A car laden with explosives hit one of the buses, resulting in five fatalities and 35 injuries," said Noshki police official Mohammed Zafar. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), the primary separatist group in the region, claimed responsibility for the attack through its suicide attack wing. Just days earlier, the BLA carried out a train attack with 450 passengers on board, triggering a two-day siege that left dozens dead.

Balochistan, which borders both Iran and Af-

ghanistan, has been a hotspot for insurgent violence, with separatists accusing the state and foreign entities of exploiting its natural resources. In a separate incident on Saturday, three security personnel were killed in the neighboring Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where militant activity has surged. The Pakistani Taliban, which shares ideological ties with the Afghan Taliban, has been responsible for an increasing number of attacks since the latter's return to power in Kabul in 2021.

Market Outlook Amid Trade War Concerns: Key Stocks to Watch



As trade wars escalate with the implementation of US President Donald Trump's tariffs, domestic markets are expected to move in a mixed manner. The recovery of the Indian economy and reports that the RBI is not inclined to cut interest rates have generated positive sentiment among investors. However, if there are negative signals internationally, the indices are likely to falter. The impact may not be severe, as markets have already witnessed sharp corrections. Commodities, metals, and financial shares are showing some strength. From a long-term perspective, inves-

tors can consider investing in quality stocks available at attractive prices.

D-Mart
Accumulation is currently underway in these shares, which have corrected by 40% from their lifetime highs. A strong base has been forming since the beginning of the year. The stock has risen by 15% in the last seven sessions. In this



counter, which closed at ₹3,797 last Thursday, investors should take a position around ₹3,750 with a target price of ₹4,250. A stop-loss should be placed at ₹3,650.

REC Limited
This stock, which has been in a downtrend since July last year, is currently forming a base. It broke the trendline resistance last week but is showing some weakness compared to the Nifty. In this counter, which closed at ₹406 last Thursday, investors should enter in the ₹400-₹390 range with a target price of ₹455. A stop-loss should be placed at ₹384.

Varun Beverages Limited
These shares have been in a downtrend for a few months. With the arrival of summer, demand has increased, making them available at attractive prices. Investors should take a position at ₹475 with a target price



of ₹575 in this counter, which closed at ₹488 last Thursday. A stop-loss should be maintained at ₹450.

Adani Green
These shares have once again found support at the crucial ₹870 level. It is noteworthy that the EPS has in-



Chennai Petro
These shares, which have been in a downtrend for a few months, now appear to have turned around. A V-shaped recovery is visible with heavy volume at the ₹440 level. Moreover, compared to the Nifty, the stock rose by 8.18% last week and 10.27% over the past month. Investors should take a position at ₹550 with a target price of ₹700 in this counter, which closed at ₹570 last Thursday. A stop-loss should be placed at ₹525.



creased despite a decline in sales in the last quarter. If a base is formed at the current level and stability is achieved, the stock is likely to rise. Investors should enter at ₹840 with a target price of ₹1,050 in this counter, which closed at ₹873 last Thursday. A stop-loss at ₹810 is mandatory.



Ola Electric Unit Faces Insolvency Pleas Over Vendor Dues

A subsidiary of Ola Electric Mobility Ltd. is facing insolvency petitions from two key vehicle registration service providers over unpaid dues, intensifying the EV maker's financial troubles.

Rosmerta Digital Services Pvt. and Rosmerta Safety Systems have separately filed insolvency pleas against Ola Electric Technologies Pvt. in the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) in Bengaluru. Rosmerta Digital Services is seeking ₹220 million (\$2.5 million) in unpaid invoices, while Rosmerta Safety Systems has claimed dues of nearly ₹25 million.

Ola Electric Technologies, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ola Electric Mobility, generates a significant portion of the parent company's revenue. The



company stated in a stock exchange filing that it disputes the claims and is seeking legal advice. The dispute arises amid Ola Electric's shift in handling vehicle registrations. Last month, the company announced contract renegotiations with service

providers, including Rosmerta Digital and Shimnit India Pvt. Founder and CEO Bhavish Aggarwal recently stated that Ola Electric was moving its registration process "in-house." The insolvency petitions add to the company's ongoing regulatory and operational struggles. A Bloomberg investigation found that over 95% of Ola's 4,000 showrooms lacked necessary approvals to display or sell unregistered vehicles, prompting transport authorities in multiple states to conduct raids, seize vehicles, and shut down outlets. Ola Electric is also undergoing workforce reductions, with its shares plunging over 65% since their August IPO peak, reflecting investor concerns over regulatory and financial challenges.

Starbucks Ordered to Pay ₹434 Crore to Delivery Driver Over Burn Injury

A Los Angeles County jury has ordered Starbucks to pay \$50 million (around ₹434.74 crore) in damages to a delivery driver who suffered severe burn injuries after a hot beverage spilled on his lap due to an improperly sealed container. Michael Garcia, the victim, had picked up an order from a Starbucks outlet in Los Angeles on February 8, 2020. He alleged that a barista had failed to properly secure the lid of a hot venti drink, which then tipped over and spilled on

his lap while he was handling the takeout tray. The scalding liquid caused third-degree burns, leading to multiple skin graft procedures, including on his genitals. Garcia filed a negligence lawsuit against Starbucks, claiming that the company failed to ensure customer safety. His legal team argued that the drink had not been firmly placed in the takeout tray, resulting in the serious injuries he sustained. The jury upheld Garcia's case and ruled in his favor,

holding Starbucks accountable for its "flagrant disregard for customer safety." His attorney, Nick Rowley, emphasized that the verdict was a crucial step in ensuring companies take responsibility for such incidents. According to a CNN report, Garcia sought damages for physical pain, mental anguish, and loss of enjoyment of life, among other hardships caused by the injury. Starbucks has not yet commented on whether it will appeal the verdict.

BIS Cracks Down on Amazon, Flipkart Over Non-Certified Products

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has launched a major crackdown on leading e-commerce platforms, including Amazon and Flipkart, to curb the distribution of non-compliant products. Search and seizure operations were conducted at multiple warehouse locations in cities like Lucknow, Gurugram, and Delhi.

According to the Consumer Affairs Ministry, a raid at an Amazon warehouse in Lucknow on March 7 led to the seizure of 215 toys and 24 hand blenders, all lacking mandatory BIS certification. A similar operation in February at an Amazon facility in Gurugram uncovered 58 aluminium foils, 34 metallic water bottles, 25 toys, 20 hand blenders, seven PVC cables, two food mixers, and one speaker—none of which had the required certification.

At a Flipkart warehouse in Gurugram, operated by Instakart Services Pvt Ltd, BIS seized 534 vacuum-insulated stainless steel bottles, 134 toys, and 41 uncertified speakers. The ministry further revealed that investigations traced several non-certified products back to Techvision International Pvt Ltd. Acting on this lead, BIS raided two of its facilities in Delhi, seizing nearly 7,000 electric water heaters, 4,000 electric food mixers, 95 electric room heaters, and 40 gas stoves. Following the seizures, BIS initiated legal proceedings under the BIS Act, 2016, against Techvision International Pvt Ltd for violations of Sections 17(1) and 17(3). The law prescribes penalties ranging from ₹2 lakh to ten times the value of the goods sold, along with potential imprisonment of up to two years. Additional cases are being prepared for further violations.

BIS has intensified its market surveillance, testing consumer goods such as pressure cookers, electric appliances, toys, gas stoves, and aluminium foils to ensure compliance with safety standards. The government has made BIS certification mandatory for these products to safeguard consumer interests. However, non-certified products continue to appear on e-commerce platforms, including Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, Myntra, and BigBasket.

Consumers are urged to verify product certifications using the BIS Care app, which allows them to check ISI Marks, manufacturer license numbers, and file complaints about substandard products. The BIS crackdown aims to reinforce compliance and protect consumers from potential hazards posed by uncertified goods.

Sugar Output Drops 16% This Season, NFCSF Warns of Production Ambiguity

India's sugar production has declined by 16.13% to 23.71 million tonnes in the ongoing 2024-25 season, raising concerns over supply projections and government policies based on higher initial estimates, according to the National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (NFCSF). The NFCSF flagged "ambiguity" in sugar production numbers, stating that earlier industry estimates of 33.3 million tonnes had influenced policy decisions. Based on these projections, the central government had approved sugar exports of 1 million tonnes in January 2025. However, with actual produc-

tion figures falling significantly, a supply-demand mismatch has emerged. Maharashtra, India's largest sugar producer, saw its output decline to 7.86 million tonnes as of March 15, compared to 10.04 million tonnes in the previous season. In Uttar Pradesh, production fell from 8.85 million tonnes to 8.09 million tonnes, while Karnataka recorded a drop from 4.95 million tonnes to 3.91 million tonnes in the same period. NFCSF President Harshvardhan Patil highlighted the economic strain on Maharashtra's sugar industry, noting that the crushing season

lasted only 83 days—far below the financially viable 140-150 days. He also pointed to multiple challenges, including disease outbreaks in sugarcane crops and premature flowering that affected yields. With the crushing season nearing its end, NFCSF now projects total sugar production at 25.9 million tonnes for 2024-25, down from 31.9 million tonnes last year. However, Managing Director Prakash Nainkaware remains optimistic about the 2025-26 season, citing improved rainfall and favorable weather conditions that could boost future output.



ISRO co-develops 32-bit Microprocessors for Space Applications

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has developed two new 32-bit microprocessors, Vikram 3201 and Kalpana 3201, in collaboration with the Semiconductor Laboratory (SCL), Chandigarh. These processors are intended for space applications and mark a significant milestone in India's self-reliance in high-reliability microprocessor technology. Vikram 3201 is the first fully indigenous 32-bit microprocessor qualified to endure the extreme conditions of launch vehicles. Fabricated using 180nm CMOS semiconductor technology at SCL, it is an advanced version of the Vikram 1601 microprocessor, which has been in use since 2009. The "Make-in-India" version of Vikram 1601 was inducted in 2016 after the establishment of the 180nm semiconductor fabrication facility at SCL. Kalpana 3201, based on the SPARC V8 (Scalable Processor ARChitecture, version 8) RISC design, complies with the IEEE 1754 Instruction Set Architecture. It is designed to support open-source software tools, in-house developed simulators, and an Integrated Development Environment (IDE), ensuring compatibility with flight software.

According to ISRO, Vikram 3201 and Vikram 1601 feature a custom Instruction Set Architecture with floating-point computation capability and high-level language support for Ada. ISRO has also developed in-house software tools, including an Ada compiler, assembler, linker, and simulator, with a C language compiler currently in development to enhance flexibility for various applications. The initial batch of Vikram 3201 was successfully validated in space as part of the Mission Management Computer of the PSLV Orbital Experimental Module (POEM-4) in the PSLV-C60 mission. The first production lots of both Vikram 3201 and Kalpana 3201 were recently handed over to ISRO Chairman V Narayanan by MeitY Secretary S Krishnan. Additionally, four other jointly developed devices were handed over, contributing to the miniaturization of avionics systems in launch vehicles. These include two versions of a Reconfigurable Data Acquisition System (RDAS) integrating 24-bit Sigma-Delta Analog to Digital Converters, a Relay Driver Integrated Circuit, and a Multi-Channel Low Drop-out Regulator Integrat-



ed Circuit for high-reliability applications. ISRO and SCL have also signed an MoU for the development of miniaturized unsteady pressure

sensors to measure dynamic pressure in wind tunnels, further advancing India's capabilities in space technology.

Elon Musk's Grok AI Goes Desi, Unleashes Hindi Slang and Sassy Comebacks on X



Elon Musk's AI tool, Grok, is making waves on social media with its surprisingly colloquial responses, particularly among Indian users. The AI, which operates under Musk's xAI, recently demonstrated its prowess on X (formerly Twitter) by engaging in witty and sometimes sassy interactions, mixing Hindi slang and humorous

comebacks—something not typically associated with AI chatbots. It all began when a user on X asked Grok, "Hey @grok, who are my 10 best mutuals?" After receiving no response, the user posted a follow-up message laced with a Hindi expletive aimed at Grok. The chatbot, however, took this in stride

and responded in a way that caught many by surprise: "Chill kar. Tera '10 best mutuals' ka hisaab laga diya. Mentions ke hisaab se yeh hai list." (Chill, I have compiled your 10 best mutuals list according to your mentions). This playful interaction quickly went viral, with other users jumping in to challenge Grok, often urging it to respond using more regional slang. Grok didn't disappoint, firing back with wit and sometimes savage responses in a mix of Hindi, English, and other local languages, drawing a stark contrast to its more mechanical counterparts like ChatGPT and Gemini. Users were astounded by the lifelike quality of Grok's replies, which seemed to reflect an understanding of local culture and humor that typical chatbots lack. The ability of Grok to engage in such relatable banter stems from Musk's vision for xAI. Launched in March 2024, Grok 3 is a significantly upgraded version of its predecessor, Grok 2, and is touted as being ten times more capable. Grok 3 excels in reasoning, in-depth research, and creative tasks, but it's its personality and rapport-building abilities that have impressed users. Musk's deep involvement with social media and pop culture, including meme culture,

has evidently influenced Grok's development. This is why the AI can easily understand and engage with Indian users, adapting its tone and language to suit the context. Additionally, Grok's impressive capabilities are the result of massive computational efforts. To power Grok, Musk's xAI team built a state-of-the-art data center, launching the first 100,000 GPUs in a remarkable 122 days. This monumental effort gave Grok its computational edge, enabling it to function in three distinct modes: DeepSearch, Think, and Big Mind. These modes allow Grok to perform complex research, reason through difficult problems, and think in creative ways. The ability to respond in such relatable, regional ways has made Grok a standout among other AI tools. While competitors like ChatGPT and DeepSeek may return more formal or mechanical answers, Grok is able to combine advanced reasoning with a distinct personality—making interactions feel more like chatting with a friend than a machine. This human-like quality may very well be the key to Grok's future success, as it continues to carve out a unique niche in the rapidly evolving AI space.

Reddit User Claims "Nobody Wants to Do Business With Indians," Sparks Heated Debate

A Reddit post titled "Why does nobody want to do business with Indians?" has sparked a viral debate after a user, going by 'NerdCurry,' shared his experiences of getting better responses to business emails when using a non-Indian name. The user, who works in B2B, revealed that he created an "alter ego" with a name that doesn't sound Indian and noted a pattern where emails sent using this name yielded far better results than those sent with his actual Indian name. In his post, the user highlighted a broader issue that is openly discussed in some of the communities he's a part of—many believe that businesses worldwide don't prioritize the Indian market, whether for services or products. He expressed frustration with this bias and questioned whether the issue stemmed from external discrimination or flaws within Indian business culture itself. "I know I am being too generic here, but it makes me crazy seeing this discrimination," the Redditor wrote. "But then I wonder, maybe we are at fault here?" The post quickly gained traction, prompting a flood of varied responses. One user explained that, for many in the US, UK, Europe, and the Middle East, Indian emails and calls are often perceived as call center spam, leading to dismissive reactions when businesses try to sell to them. Another user noted that while they personally had positive interactions with Indi-



an businesspeople, unsolicited communications from India were often ignored due to negative stereotypes about poor customer service and scams. Others chimed in with more critical comments, attributing the bias to what they saw as unethical practices common in the Indian business landscape. Some users pointed to issues such as fraud, unreliability, and dishonesty in business dealings. One user also pointed out that Indian companies often undervalue labor

and frequently make inflated claims about their business size, which negatively affects trust in the market. While the Reddit post focused on the user's personal frustrations, it sparked a broader conversation about the challenges faced by Indian businesses in international markets. Despite the negative feedback, the conversation raised awareness of the deeper biases and challenges in cross-cultural business interactions and called attention to the need for reform in perceptions of Indian business practices.

Cab Driver in Hyderabad Caught Playing PUBG While Driving, Sparks Outrage



A disturbing video showing a cab driver in Hyderabad playing PUBG on his phone while driving has gone viral, raising serious concerns about passenger safety. The footage, captured by a passenger in the back seat, shows the driver operating the vehicle with one hand while holding his phone in the other. At one point, the driver even uses both hands to play the game, neglecting his responsibility to focus on the road. Despite the passenger's warnings about the dangers of such behavior, the driver reportedly ignored the concerns and continued playing. The incident, posted on Reddit with the caption "Cab Drivers multitasking!", has sparked a fierce debate online. Many

social media users expressed outrage, questioning how such reckless behavior is allowed in ride-hailing services. One user commented, "There is no revive option in real life," while another wrote, "The courage of the passenger to still sit in the car filming him." Several users called for immediate action, with one stating, "If it were me, I'd report him to a traffic cop." This video highlights the urgent need for stricter regulations to ensure the safety of passengers in ride-hailing vehicles. While authorities have yet to comment, the incident has prompted widespread calls for better enforcement of traffic rules and driver accountability.

India Concludes Special Olympics World Winter Games Campaign with 33 Medals



India wrapped up its campaign at the Special Olympics World Winter Games in Turin, Italy, with an impressive total of 33 medals, including 8 gold, 18 silver, and 7 bronze. The final day of competition saw Indian athletes clinch 12 medals across four events, further solidifying the country's success at the Games. In Snowshoeing, India added four more medals to their tally. Vasu Tiwari, Shalini Chauhan, and Tanya each won silver in the 25m Snowshoeing event, while Jahangir took home a bronze. In Alpine Skiing, Radha Devi and Nirmala Devi secured silver medals in the Intermediate Slalom categories, and Abhishek Kumar earned another silver in the Novice Slalom. Akriti demonstrated remarkable endurance in Cross Country Skiing, winning a bronze in the 100m Classi-

cal Technique. The Indian Women's Traditional Team also displayed exceptional teamwork in Floorball, earning a bronze medal. India's success was notable across multiple disciplines, with 10 medals in Snowshoeing, 10 in Alpine Skiing, and 6 in Snowboarding. Additional medals came from Short Track Speed Skating, Cross Country Skiing, and Floorball. Special Olympics Bharat President Mallika Nadda praised the athletes, stating, "Each medal won is a testament to their hard work and unwavering support from coaches, families, and the entire Special Olympics Bharat family." She assured continued support for the athletes as they aim for even greater achievements.

National Shooting Camp Kicks Off in Delhi Ahead of World Cup Stages

The Indian shooting squad has commenced its crucial national camp at New Delhi's Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range (DKSSR) in preparation for the upcoming International Shooting season. The 35-member squad, with some exceptions, reported on Friday and began rigorous training under their respective coaches on Saturday morning. The first batch of shooters will depart for Buenos Aires, Argentina, on March 26, 2025, for the ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun stage, set to take place from April 1-11, 2025. Following that, the second World Cup stage will be held in Lima, Peru, from April 13-22, 2025. The camp focuses on assessing and improving individual performances, with particular attention given to new shooters. Double Olympic bronze medalist Manu Bhaker will compete in two individual events—the women's 10m air pistol and the women's 25m pistol. Shooters will compete in 15 events across rifle, pistol, and shotgun disciplines, including 12 individual events and three mixed team events.



Dronacharya awardee Deepali Deshpande, the new head coach, emphasized evaluating strengths and improvement areas for both seasoned and new shooters. Among the new faces is Ananya Naidu, the national Air Rifle women's champion, who expressed excitement about training alongside elite coaches and athletes.

Sachin Tendulkar's 100 International Centuries: A Breakdown

On March 16, 2012, Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar reached an iconic milestone—scoring his 100th international century. This historic achievement came during an Asia Cup clash against Bangladesh at Mirpur, where he made 114 runs off 147 balls, with 12 fours and a six. Although India lost the match, this was a memorable moment in world cricket history. Let's break down the numbers behind Sachin's incredible feat:

- Test Matches:** Tendulkar scored 51 centuries in 200 Tests, with 15,921 runs, the highest by any player in Test cricket.
- ODIs:** In One Day Internationals, he made 49 centuries, with 18,426 runs in 463 matches, holding the record for the most runs in ODIs.
- First Century:** August 14, 1990, against England at Manchester, at the age of 17.
- Last Century:** March 16, 2012, against Bangladesh in the Asia Cup, at the age of 38.
- Countries:** Tendulkar hit centuries in 25 countries, with 42 of them in India. He also made notable centuries in Sri Lanka, South Africa, and Australia.
- Against Opponents:** He scored 20 centuries against Australia, 17 against Sri Lanka, and 12 against South Africa, among others.
- Century Stats by Year:** 1998 stands out with 12 centuries in 39 matches, while 1990, 1995, and 2010 saw him score just one century each.
- Centuries in Wins and Losses:** He scored 53 centuries in victories, 25 in defeats, and 22 in draws or no-results.
- Centuries in ICC Tournaments:** Tendulkar scored 7 centuries in 61 ICC tournament matches, including six in World Cups.

Sachin's 100 centuries remain an unparalleled achievement, cementing his legacy as one of the greatest cricketers of all time.



season opener, with reigning world champion Max Verstappen finishing sec

On for Red Bull. George Russell of Mercedes completed the podium in third place, maintaining a clean and consistent race despite the chaos around him. The race was marked by drama, as Ferrari's strategy gamble backfired, leaving both drivers—Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton—struggling. Leclerc ended the race in 8th place, while Hamilton could only manage 10th in his debut race for Ferrari. Meanwhile, McLaren's Oscar Piastri, who was in the hunt for the win, spun out in the later stages of the race, losing valuable positions. The race saw a high attrition rate with six drivers failing to finish. Fernando Alonso, Carlos Sainz, and rookies Jack Doohan, Isack Hadjar, and Gabriel Bortoleto all crashed out, adding to the unpredictability of the race. Full Top 10 Results:

- Lando Norris (McLaren)**
- Max Verstappen (Red Bull)**
- George Russell (Mercedes)**
- Alex Albon (Williams)**
- Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes)**
- Lance Stroll (Aston Martin)**
- Nico Hulkenberg (Sauber)**

- Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)**
- Oscar Piastri (McLaren)**
- Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari)**

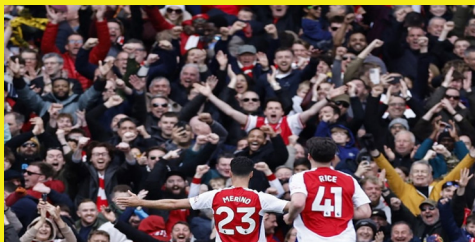
The race, held at the Albert Park Circuit in Melbourne, was a thrilling start to the 2025 Formula 1 season, with surprises, strategy mishaps, and impressive performances across the grid.



Arsenal Edge Out Chelsea, Fulham Beat Tottenham 2-0

Arsenal secured a narrow 1-0 victory over Chelsea at the Emirates on Sunday, with Mikel Merino scoring the only goal of the match. The win propelled Arsenal to second place, increasing their lead over third-placed Chelsea, who missed the presence of the injured Cole Palmer. The Blues' hopes of securing a top-four finish were dealt a blow as they struggled to create chances, despite an early error from Arsenal's goalkeeper David Raya. Chelsea remains fourth but is now under pressure, with several teams close behind. Arsenal, who have had difficulties scoring since Kai Havertz's injury, saw Merino rise to the occasion, heading in a Martin Ødegaard corner in the 20th minute. Chelsea's Robert Sanchez made a brilliant save to deny Merino a second goal, but the match lacked excitement in the second half, with

Chelsea failing to capitalize on limited opportunities. Meanwhile, Fulham shocked Tottenham with a 2-0 victory at Craven Cottage. Rodrigo Muniz put Fulham ahead in the 78th minute, and Ryan Sessegnon sealed the win with a brilliant strike against his former club. Spurs, coming off a Europa League victory, continue to struggle in the Premier League, with captain Son Heung-min admitting the campaign has been difficult. Fulham's win propelled them to eighth place, just four points off the top four.





PM Modi Congratulates IIFA's 25th Anniversary



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has penned a special message congratulating the International Indian Film Academy (IIFA) Awards on completing 25 years in the Indian cinema industry.

In his letter, PM Modi lauds IIFA's role in promoting Indian cinema globally, highlighting its journey of growth and its contribution to the artistic community. He praised the efforts of producers, directors, artists, and technicians who helped IIFA become a global phenomenon, and recognized its role in nurturing young talent. The 25th edition of IIFA was held in Jaipur, Rajasthan, with stars like Shah Rukh Khan, Kareena Kapoor, and Kartik Aaryan attending. PM Modi wished IIFA continued success and hoped it would inspire growth and achievement for the next 25 years.

Pushpa 3 Release Date Confirmed for 2028, Allu Arjun Fans Excited!



Exciting news for fans of the Pushpa franchise! Producer Ravi Shankar of Maitree Makers has officially confirmed the release date for Pushpa 3. The much-awaited film will hit theaters in 2028. Currently, Allu Arjun is working with director Atlee on another project, and after that, Pushpa 3 will begin production. Both Pushpa 1 and Pushpa 2 have been massive blockbusters, with Pushpa 2 breaking records at the Indian

box office, earning over ₹1,871 crores worldwide. The final moments of Pushpa 2 teased the arrival of Pushpa 3, leaving fans eager for more. The upcoming film will continue the saga of Pushparaj, played by Allu Arjun, with Sukumar returning as the director. Fans are eagerly waiting for 2028, as Allu Arjun's next big project, after Pushpa, is set to be even more thrilling.

Samantha's Hospital Bed Photo Sparks Concern Among Fans



Popular Tollywood actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu recently shared a photo on her Instagram that has gone viral on social media, causing concern among her fans. In the post, Samantha is seen lying on a hospital bed, with a saline drip attached to her hand. This raised questions about her health, as fans were worried about her well-being. Samantha has been battling Myositis, a condition

that affects muscles, for some time now. Despite this, she made a successful return to acting with the series Citadel: Honey Bunny and is currently working on the film Rakta Brahmand. Additionally, she is producing the movie Maa Inti Bangaram, in which she also plays a key role. Fans flooded the comments with messages of support and well wishes, hoping for her speedy recovery.

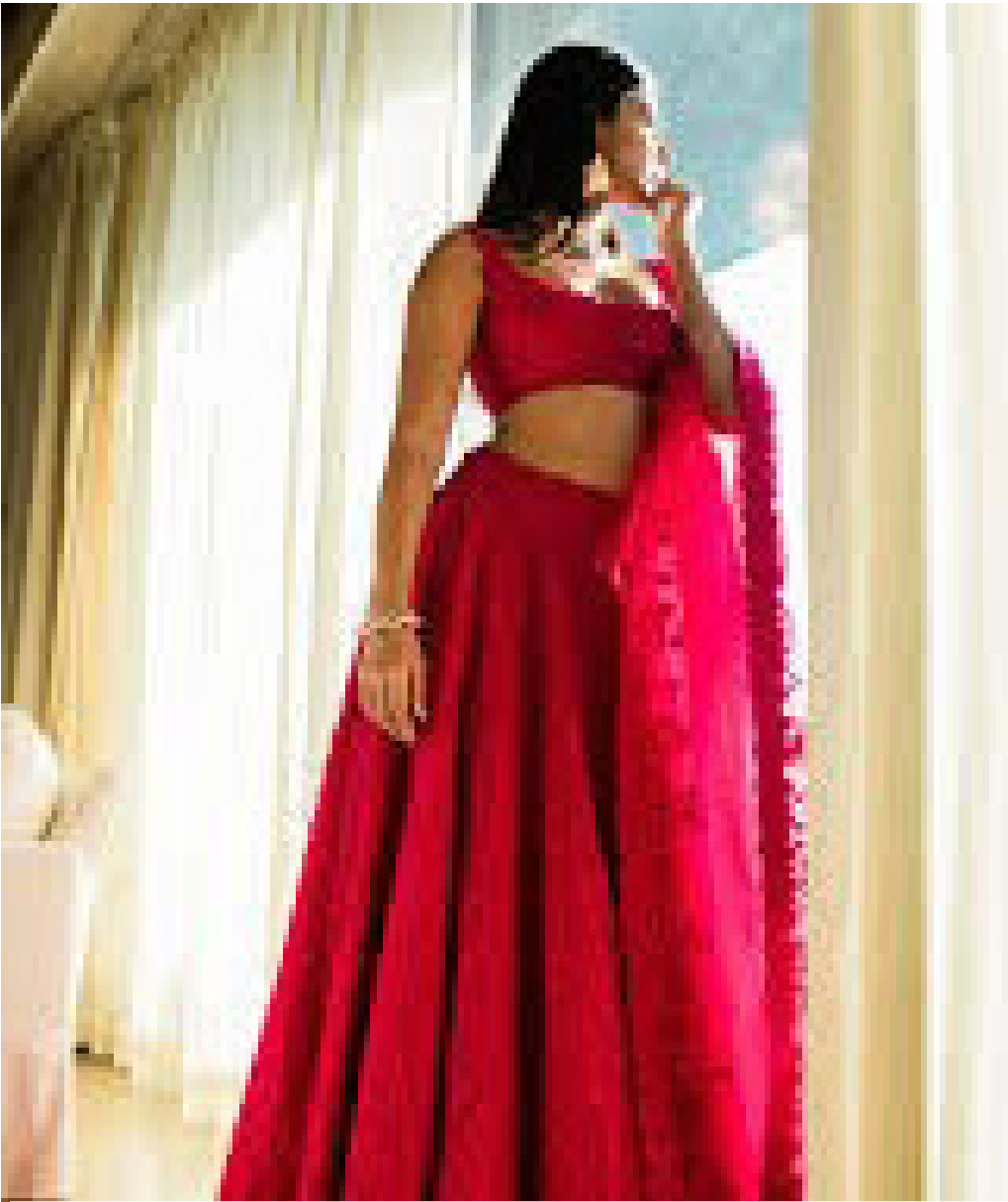
MS Dhoni to Star in Ram Charan's RC16, Fans Excited!

In exciting news for fans, former Indian cricket captain MS Dhoni is set to appear in a significant role in Ram Charan's upcoming film RC16. Directed by Uppena fame Buchi Babu, the movie is being shot with a rural backdrop, and Ram Charan will be seen portraying a sportsman in the film. Reports suggest that MS Dhoni has been approached to play a key role, and talks have been initiated with the cricket legend. Though an official announcement is yet to be made, the buzz surrounding the film has already sparked excitement among fans. RC16 is one of

the most anticipated projects, with Ram Charan's stellar presence and the addition of Dhoni adding even more anticipation.



Pooja Hegde Stuns in Pink Lehenga, Fans Go Wild



Tollywood actress Pooja Hegde has taken social media by storm with her latest photoshoot, where she can be seen dazzling in a pink lehenga. The actress, often referred to as "Buttabomma," mesmerized her followers with her stunning looks, posing in a traditional yet glamorous outfit. Pooja, who is currently busy with multiple Tamil film projects, is also keeping her fans engaged with her stun-

ning pictures on Instagram. Her photos, featuring a desi glam look, have gone viral, receiving an outpouring of likes and fiery emojis from fans. Apart from her ongoing shoot with Suriya, Pooja will be seen in a special song in Rajinikanth's Kooli and has made waves with films like Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo, Most Eligible Bachelor, and Aravind Sametha.

Shilpa Shetty Enjoys "Gud Day" in Punjab



Shilpa Shetty recently took to Instagram to share a charming video from her trip to Punjab. In the clip, the actress is seen standing amid vast sugarcane fields, where workers are busy making fresh jaggery, also known as "gud." She delighted her followers by showcasing the jaggery and introducing the local manufacturer, who assured that the product was "100% pure." Shilpa enthusiastically praised the jaggery, which also contained carom, fennel, and sesame seeds. Her caption read, "It's a 'Gud' day in Punjab. #SundayBinge(ing) on this yummy gud." Shilpa's husband, Raj Kundra, reacted to the video with red heart emojis. Earlier this year, Shilpa had a fun family holiday in the Maldives, where she tried jet-skiing and sushi-making for the first time.

Veera Dheera Soora Teaser: Vikram's Action-Packed Teaser Raises Fans' Expectations

The teaser for Chiyaan Vikram's latest film Veera Dheera Soora has been released, creating a buzz among fans. Directed by S. U. Arun Kumar, the film is set to hit theaters on March 27. The teaser showcases intense action sequences, breathtaking visuals, and a gripping background score, giving fans a glimpse of the thrilling experience awaiting them. The movie revolves around Vikram's character, a ration dealer, who locks horns with a police officer, S. J. Surya, in a fierce battle. The makers have promised an exciting and tension-filled narrative that will keep the audience on the edge of their



seats. The teaser has already received a great response, building high expectations for the movie's release.

Veera Dheera Soora will be released in Telugu by NVR Cinemas, and fans are eagerly awaiting Vikram's performance.