

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

t°

H 33° C

L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

t°

H 35° C

L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

t°

H 36° C

L 26° C



Speaker UT Khader Slams Karnataka Ministers for Assembly Absenteeism

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Assembly Speaker UT Khader has strongly reprimanded state ministers for their repeated absence during legislative sessions, stating that their conduct is damaging the government's reputation. He expressed frustration that despite various efforts to improve governance, ministers continue to neglect their responsibilities. On Monday evening, when a key discussion was taking place, only Minister Krishna Byre Gowda was present, while the rest were absent. "Ministers must be present in the Assembly; their absence is unacceptable. Their negligence is causing disrespect to the administration, despite the good work being done," Khader asserted. He further questioned the ministers' commitment, asking, "What is the point of being a minister if they do not attend Assembly discussions? If they cannot fulfill their responsibilities, let someone else take their place."

The opposition also raised concerns over the absenteeism, with BJP MLA Sunil Kumar accusing the government of abandoning its duties. "Who are we supposed to question when the ministers themselves are missing? The Speaker should intervene to uphold the sanctity of the Assembly," he said. Earlier, Speaker Khader introduced 15 recliners in the Assembly lounge, allowing MLAs to rest post-lunch. He even proposed installing massage chairs to keep members "refreshed." However, the attendance crisis continues, with many ministers reportedly leaving the session immediately after the Chief Minister exits.

"The Assembly does not end when the CM leaves. The House is the core of governance, and ministers must respect it," Khader warned.

Speaker criticizes ministers for skipping crucial discussions

Opposition questions government's accountability

Assembly lounge equipped with recliners, but attendance issues persist

Chaos in Karnataka Assembly Over CM Siddaramaiah's Remarks on RSS

Speaker expunges CM's remarks and BJP's counter statements

BJP accuses Siddaramaiah of favoring SDPI, PFI

Heated exchanges over crime rate and RSS history



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Legislative Assembly descended into chaos on Monday after Chief Minister Siddaramaiah made remarks against the RSS while responding to the Governor's address. Opposition BJP legislators strongly objected, demanding that the comments be removed from records. Speaker UT Khader eventually expunged both Siddaramaiah's remarks and BJP's counterstatements to restore order. Siddaramaiah claimed that the state's law and order situation had improved compared to the previous BJP government. He presented statistics showing a decline in crimes, including a drop in narcotics cases from 6,406 (2022-23) to 4,188 (till February 2025). He also highlighted reductions in murder, robbery, and atrocities against SC/STs. However, his comments against the RSS sparked outrage, leading to slogans

and disruptions from BJP MLAs. Leader of Opposition R. Ashoka insisted that the CM withdraw his remarks, emphasizing that even the Prime Minister and Home Minister have RSS backgrounds. BJP MLAs accused the Congress government of being sympathetic to SDPI and PFI, citing its decision to withdraw criminal cases against certain members. The government categorically denied the allegations. As the session grew more heated, Ashoka accused Siddaramaiah of deliberately provoking the House to force an adjournment. The CM countered by recalling that former Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel had banned the RSS following Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge questioned why the RSS did not hoist the national flag at its Nagpur headquarters after Independence. BJP's Sunil Kumar retaliated by questioning Kharge about his residence, triggering further exchanges. BJP MLAs chanted 'RSS Zindabad,' while Congress members countered with 'Murdabad' slogans. The Assembly also saw protests over Congress MLAs allegedly flaunting the national flag, while BJP legislators were accused of recording videos inside the House, leading to warnings from the Speaker.

Kannada Actress Ranya Rao's Key Role in Gold Smuggling - DRI Probe Reveals





TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials investigating a large-scale gold smuggling racket have identified Kannada actress Ranya Rao as a key player in the illegal trade. Reports indicate that she has been involved in smuggling activities for several years, with crucial details emerging from the ongoing probe. Despite her claims of being falsely implicated, officials have uncovered evidence pointing to her active participation. Another accused, hotelier Tarun Raj, has been identified as her close associate. Investigations revealed that the duo co-founded Vira Diamond Trading LLC in Dubai in 2023 and have been business partners since then. Authorities disclosed that Ranya Rao and Tarun Raj maintained strong ties with prominent gold

Ranya Rao allegedly played a major role in gold smuggling

Business partner Tarun Raj also under investigation

DRI probing financial transactions via Dubai bank accounts

traders in Bangkok and Geneva. They allegedly procured gold bars from these sources, facilitating payments in foreign currency through Dubai-based bank accounts. The DRI is closely tracking financial transactions to uncover further connections and potential accomplices. Adding to the complexity of the case, Ranya Rao's stepfather, senior IPS officer K. Ramachandra Rao, has also come under scrutiny. Officials are questioning him regarding his alleged involvement in the smuggling network. With the investigation ongoing, authorities are focused on tracing financial links, identifying additional associates, and establishing the full scope of the operation. Further developments in the case are expected as officials continue their probe into international gold smuggling routes.

HM Parameshwara Defends Karnataka's Law & Order, Counters Opposition Allegations

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara strongly defended Karnataka's law and order situation, countering allegations from the opposition that crime had worsened under the Congress government. Speaking in response to an adjournment motion, he stated that Karnataka's crime rate remains lower than that of states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh due to strict measures taken by the government. Parameshwara cited data showing that 2022 saw 27 major law and order incidents, the highest in the last five years, and also recorded 29 communal clashes—the most since 2018. Addressing the recent attack on Udayagiri police station in Mysuru, he acknowledged that only a few police personnel were present at the time but assured that forces were mobilized quickly to contain the situation. He also announced plans for an additional police station in the area to handle the jurisdiction's 4.5 lakh population. Regarding the Gangavathi incident, where a foreign tourist was raped and a man was murdered, Parameshwara highlighted the government's response, including enhanced patrolling around Hampi and mandating homestay and resort owners to submit foreign guest details to the police. Additional patrol vehicles have been deployed in Anegundi, Sanapura, Basapura, and surrounding areas. When opposition leaders called him a "weak" Home Minister, Parameshwara retorted, "Should I go on rounds holding a lathi?" Following this, BJP members staged a walkout in protest. On the issue of



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Kumaraswamy Denies Land Encroachment Allegations, Calls It a Political Conspiracy

Kumaraswamy vows legal battle against Karnataka government

Claims land was legally purchased 40 years ago

Revenue department begins land recovery as per High Court order



TPN Correspondent | Ra-managara

Union Minister and former Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy on Tuesday dismissed allegations of land encroachment, accusing the Congress government of politically targeting him. He asserted that the land in question was legally acquired 40 years ago and vowed to fight the matter through legal means. Before leaving for New Delhi, Kumaraswamy stated that he had not received any official notice regarding the issue. "Even if an ordinary citizen is to be evicted, the law mandates a 15-day notice. Yet, I have not received any such communication," he said. He criticized the government's move, labeling it an act of political vendetta and part of a larger conspiracy to malign him. Following the Karnataka High Court's directive, the state revenue department has begun reclaiming over 14 acres of

Karnataka Speaker Warns Opposition Over Unruly Behavior in Assembly

- Speaker UT Khader warns Opposition members to maintain decorum
- Heated exchange over alleged diversion of SCSP/ TSP funds
- BJP MLA Harish Poonja told to leave for disrupting proceedings



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Legislative Assembly witnessed a tense atmosphere as ruling and opposition members clashed over the alleged diversion of Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) funds for the state's guarantee schemes. The situation escalated during Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's reply to the Governor's address at Vidhana Soudha, prompting Speaker UT Khader to issue a stern warning to the Opposition. As BJP legislators vocally protested, Speaker Khader cautioned them against creating a ruckus, stating there is a limit to everything. He urged them to either sit and listen or leave the House. However, when BJP MLA Harish Poonja continued to disregard instructions and refused to sit in his designated chair, the Speaker firmly asked him to "get out." This remark led to further chaos, with opposition members protesting against the Speaker's language.

Senior BJP MLA CC Patil objected to the Speaker's comments, arguing that no presiding officer had ever spoken in such a manner to members of the House. He also demanded that the Speaker's words be removed from official records, calling them unparliamentary. Despite the uproar, Speaker Khader maintained his stand, reiterating that order must be maintained in the Assembly. The ruling party members backed his stance, while opposition leaders continued to express dissatisfaction over the handling of the debate. The controversy arose when BJP leaders questioned the alleged misallocation of SCSP/TSP funds. The debate intensified as CM Siddaramaiah defended the government's actions, leading to disruptions and verbal clashes. The Speaker's strong intervention and warning have now sparked discussions over parliamentary decorum and the conduct of legislative proceedings in Karnataka.

Karnataka Govt Introduces Muslim Quota in Contracts

- 4% reservation for Muslims in tenders under new Bill
- BJP calls it "minority appeasement," vows to challenge in court
- Bill amends KTPP Act to increase contract reservation limits



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government, led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, introduced a Bill in the Assembly on Tuesday to provide a 4% reservation for Muslims in government tenders, citing efforts to address unemployment. The move, however, has sparked strong opposition from the BJP, which has termed it "minority appeasement" and an "unconstitutional misadventure." The party has announced plans to challenge the Bill in court. The Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements (KTPP) Bill, approved by the Cabinet last week, grants a 4% quota for Muslims classified under Category-2B of Other Backward Classes (OBC). Currently, SC/STs have a 24% reservation in construction contracts up to ₹1 crore—17.15% for Scheduled Castes and 6.95% for Scheduled Tribes. The Bill proposes increasing this limit to ₹2 crore. Additionally, OBCs in Category-1 (4%) and Category-2A (15%) already have reservations in contracts up to ₹1 crore. The Bill extends the reservation structure to include 4% for Muslims, 4% for Category-1, and 15% for Category-2A in government tenders for procuring goods and services up to ₹1 crore. This move aligns with the announcements made in Siddaramaiah's 2025-26 Budget. The government argues that these amendments are essential to implementing Budget propos-

als and addressing unemployment. The BJP, however, argues that religion-based reservation is unconstitutional. It points out that the previous BJP government, led by Basavaraj Bommai, scrapped the 4% Muslim quota and moved the community to the 10% Economically Weaker Section (EWS) category—a decision currently pending before the Supreme Court. BJP MP Tejasvi Surya criticized the move, citing Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's opposition to religion-based reservations. Meanwhile, IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge defended the government, stating that the reservation is merely an extension of existing provisions and does not constitute a special favor for Muslims. With the BJP set to challenge the Bill in court, the issue is likely to become a major political flashpoint in Karnataka.

Karnataka Govt Proposes Special Court for Fake Medicine Cases

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka government plans to establish a special court to handle cases related to the supply of fake medicines. Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao informed the Legislative Council on Monday. He expressed concerns that judgments in such cases are being delayed, allowing offenders to escape with minimal consequences. Responding to a query from Congress MLC S Ravi, Rao criticized the current judicial process, stating that accused individuals merely spend a few hours in court as their only punishment. He emphasized that the government is ensuring companies supplying fake medicines face severe financial penalties. Additionally, the government is working on a drug recall policy to further impact fraudulent suppliers and manufacturers. According to data presented in the House, 20 cases have been registered against fake medicine suppliers over the past three years. However, Rao expressed frustration over the Karnataka Administrative Tribunal (KAT), which has frequently granted stays in such cases. He cited a recent instance where doctors deputed to the Food Safety Department were repatriated to hospitals, but KAT issued a stay, stating the transfers occurred mid-year. The minister affirmed that steps would be taken to



vacate such stays, stressing that these doctors are needed in hospitals and do not necessarily have to serve as food safety officers. In response to a question by JD(S) MLC T A Saravana, Rao revealed that 27 doctors had been working as food safety officers on deputation. With the government pushing for stricter measures, the proposed special court is expected to expedite trials and strengthen action against fake medicine suppliers.

Revenue Dept Clears Encroached Land Linked to Kumaraswamy in Ramanagara

- 14 acres of government land under encroachment cleared
- High Court orders enforcement of eviction in Kethaganahalli village
- SIT investigation confirms illegal occupation in multiple survey numbers



TPN Correspondent | Ramanagara

The Karnataka Revenue Department launched an eviction drive on Tuesday to clear 14 acres of encroached government land in Ramanagara district, allegedly linked to the family of Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy. The clearance follows a directive from the High Court, urging strict enforcement against land encroachments. In coordination with district officials and police personnel, earthmovers were deployed to reclaim the land in Kethaganahalli village, Bidadi. This action comes after the Special Investigation Team (SIT), constituted in January, confirmed illegal occupation of land spanning multiple survey numbers—7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, and 79—through a joint survey by the Revenue and Survey Settlement Departments. The case is currently under judicial review,

and during a hearing on Monday, the High Court criticized the delay in executing its eviction order. The court has scheduled the next hearing for March 19 and directed the Revenue Department to submit a status report. Meanwhile, R Devaraju, representing Kumaraswamy, addressed district authorities on March 15, requesting the return of any land encroached upon while also urging officials to identify land belonging to Kumaraswamy that had allegedly been lost in the same village.

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HM Parameshwara Defends Karnataka's Law & Order, Counters Opposition Allegations

illegal immigration, Parameshwara called for tighter border security with Bangladesh, stating that rules for deportation must be simplified. He admitted that the number of illegal migrants in Karnataka could be higher than official figures, citing cas-

es in Chikkamagaluru, Madikeri, and Udupi. He noted that 33 illegal Bangladeshis were deported from Vijayapura and urged the Union Government to enhance border security like on the Indo-Pakistan border.

Kumaraswamy Denies Land Encroachment Allegations, Calls It a Political Conspiracy

government land at Kethaganahalli in Ramanagara district. Officials have deployed JCBs and survey equipment to carry out the process. JDS legislative leader Suresh Babu condemned the government's actions, alleging "politics of hatred" against Kumaraswamy. "Instead of conducting a fair survey, the government is acting with a po-

litical agenda," he claimed. Kumaraswamy warned that such actions would have long-term consequences and accused the government of "looting Bengaluru." He urged the media to verify facts before reporting and assured his supporters that he would fight the case within the legal framework.

Karnataka HC Upholds Microfin Law, Calls It Protective Shield

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court upheld the constitutional validity of the Karnataka Micro Loan and Small Loan (Prevention of Coercive Actions) Ordinance, 2025, dismissing a petition filed by the Karnataka Hire Purchase Association. Justice M Nagaprasanna ruled that the ordinance does not interfere with secured transactions undertaken by regulated financial entities. Instead, it provides a protective shield for borrowers with an annual income of ₹3 lakh or less, preventing coercive recovery methods used by unsecured microfinance lenders. The petitioners, motor vehicle financiers operating through hypothecation, hire purchase, and leasing models, argued that the ordinance had stripped them of their rights by mandating the immediate release of all



hypothecations and mortgages from its promulgation date. They claimed the law jeopardized their business by prohibiting future collateralization. However, the court rejected these claims, stating that the ordinance was designed to protect vulnerable groups, including farmers, women,

and workers, from exploitative moneylenders and microfinance entities known for harsh recovery tactics. The court emphasized that legislative records and public knowledge highlight instances where such practices have led to extreme distress and even suicides among debt-ridden borrowers.

Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway faces delays, now set for 2026 completion

TPN Correspondent Bengaluru:

The much-anticipated Bengaluru-Chennai Expressway, which aims to enhance connectivity between the two major cities, is now expected to be fully operational by June 2026. This marks a significant delay from the previously announced deadline of August 2025, with construction challenges being cited as the primary reason for the setback, according to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

Spanning 262 km, the expressway has seen only 71 km completed so far,

while the remaining sections continue to face hurdles.

The Karnataka segment of the highway was completed and informally opened for traffic in December 2024, but work in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu remains sluggish. Responding to a query from Rajya Sabha MP Lahar Singh Siroya, Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari confirmed that the remaining stretches are now scheduled for completion by mid-2026.

Last month, the 68-km stretch in Karnataka

was made accessible for vehicular traffic, though an official inauguration is still pending. The expressway, which extends through Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu before reaching Sriperumbudur near Chennai, has been designed for high-speed travel with a maximum speed limit of 120 kmph. It is touted as South India's first greenfield expressway and is expected to reduce travel time between Bengaluru and Chennai from seven hours to just three. The ₹17,900-crore project is seen as a major infrastructural boost for

the region.

In a recent development, the NHAI has banned two-wheelers from the expressway following a tragic accident that claimed four lives, including that of a two-year-old girl.

Currently, motorists exit the expressway via a village road to reach Mulbagal and the Andhra Pradesh border. With the extended timeline, authorities are hopeful that the expressway will be fully operational by mid-2026, significantly improving regional connectivity and economic activity.



Bengaluru man loses ₹1.4 lakh in ‘Kumbh Mela crisis’ scam

TPN Correspondent Bengaluru:

A Bengaluru resident was defrauded of ₹1.4 lakh by a scammer posing as a BBMP engineer in distress, who claimed to be stranded at the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj. The fraudster convinced the victim to transfer money for booking flight tickets, promising repayment upon returning to Bengaluru.

According to reports, the 54-year-old victim, a private firm employee from Banashankari, became involved in the scam after his friend received a call from an un-

known number on March 5. The caller, speaking in Hindi, introduced himself as Venkatesh, a BBMP engineer, and claimed that he and his family had missed their flight back home. Since the victim's friend struggled to understand Hindi, he took over the conversation.

The scammer insisted on urgent financial help, and after confirming that his friend knew a BBMP engineer by that name, the victim transferred ₹1.4 lakh in two transactions through a digital payment app.

The fraud came to



light when the victim's attempts to reach the caller the following day went unanswered. As days passed without any response, he realized he had been duped and filed a police complaint. Authorities

are now tracing the scammer based on the transaction details.

A senior officer investigating the case pointed out that the victim should have been cautious, as a genuine BBMP official

from Bengaluru would likely speak Kannada instead of Hindi. The incident adds to the growing number of online and phone-based scams targeting unsuspecting individuals.

Earlier in January, a 70-year-old Bengaluru resident lost nearly ₹89 lakh in a sophisticated cyber fraud that involved criminals posing as law enforcement officials. The case highlights the increasing prevalence of digital fraud in the city, prompting police to urge citizens to be vigilant against such scams.

KDA urges BMRCCL to prioritize Kannadiga recruitment

TPN Correspondent Bengaluru:

The Kannada Development Authority (KDA) has called on the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCCL) to recruit Kannadigas for vacant positions across its departments. This comes in response to a recent advertisement by BMRCCL seeking experienced professionals for train operator posts, which stated that knowledge of Kannada was “preferable” rather than mandatory.

The advertisement, published on March 12, mentioned that candidates without Kannada proficiency must acquire it within a year of joining, with BMRCCL providing language training. However, KDA chairman

Purushothama Bilimale has expressed dissatisfaction with this approach, particularly regarding temporary technical posts.

In a letter to BMRCCL Managing Director M Maheshwar Rao, Bilimale urged the metro authority to halt the recruitment process until Kannadigas are given priority in hiring. He also insisted that employees who have not learned Kannada should be relieved of their duties and that both technical and non-technical roles should be reserved for local candidates.

Bilimale further stated that he intends to visit BMRCCL soon to review the implementation of Kannada within the organization.

‘Cauvery Aarti’ at Bengaluru’s Sankey Tank to promote water conservation

TPN Correspondent Bengaluru:

In an effort to raise awareness about water conservation and sustainable water management, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), in collaboration with various organizations, will host ‘Cauvery Aarti’ at Sankey Tank in Sadashivanagar on March 21 at 6 PM. The event, the first of its kind in Karnataka, aims to pay tribute to the Cauvery River, Bengaluru’s primary water source.

BWSSB Chairman Ram



Prasath Manohar highlighted the significance of the Cauvery River, stating that it has been Karnataka's lifeline for centuries,

supporting both the city's growth and the livelihoods of people across the state. He emphasized the importance of water con-

servation, urging people to recognize their responsibility in preserving this invaluable resource amid rising water challenges.

As part of the ceremony, sacred water from Bhagamandala in Kodagu district will be brought in ceremonial pots and used for the ritual. Alongside the religious observance, the event will also serve as a platform to educate the public on sustainable practices such as treated water reuse, groundwater recharge, and rainwater harvesting. The ‘World

Water Pledge’ campaign will also be launched on the same day to encourage responsible water usage.

Manohar further stressed the need for adopting water-saving habits in daily life. He stated that promoting the use of treated wastewater for non-drinking purposes could significantly reduce the burden on fresh water sources. The event seeks to inspire individuals and communities to contribute towards water conservation and sustainable resource management.

Land acquisition troubles stall Bengaluru Business Corridor-2 project

TPN Correspondent Bengaluru:

The ambitious 52-km Bengaluru Business Corridor-2 (BBC-2), formerly known as Peripheral Ring Road-2, is facing significant hurdles due to land acquisition issues. The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has encountered opposition from landowners over approximately 250 acres, creating obstacles for the project, which requires a total of 1,400 acres.

BBC-2 is designed to enhance connectivity by linking Hosur Road to Tumakuru Road via Bannerghatta Road, Kanakapura Road, Mysuru Road, and Magadi Road. However,

the current land dispute stems from BDA's conflicting alignments issued in 2005 and 2006. Initially, the project was set to connect Madavara with Magadi Road in 2005, and a preliminary notification was issued for land acquisition. However, concerns over potential traffic congestion on Tumakuru Road led the authorities to revise the alignment in 2006, shifting the route to pass through Madanayakanahalli instead.

The problem now arises from the fact that the 2006 realignment left out certain land parcels from acquisition, prompting landowners to construct



homes and commercial buildings on those plots. Many of these structures now fall within the newly proposed acquisition area, leading to strong protests from residents who are shocked by the fresh notices from BDA. Officials, however, argue that sev-

eral of these buildings are illegal constructions.

A BDA official explained that the preliminary notification from 2005 was never officially canceled, as doing so would require denotification, which could lead to further legal complications. Mean-

while, land acquisition officers are under scrutiny for issuing notices for both the 2005 and 2006 alignments, causing confusion among affected landowners.

The dispute has already led to tensions, with around 200 landowners storming the BDA's Kengeri office two months ago, protesting against the disconnection of electricity to their homes. BDA had reportedly asked Bescom to cut off power supply to houses situated along the BBC-2 alignment, labeling them as illegal constructions. With tenders for Bengaluru Business Corridor-1 (BBC-1) yet to be floated due to ongoing compensation disputes, the BBC-2 project now faces further uncertainty, delaying its progress indefinitely.

Bengaluru’s KIA named best airport for arrivals for third consecutive year



TPN Correspondent Bengaluru:

Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has once again been recognized as the world's best airport for arrivals, securing the prestigious ACI ASQ Award for 2024. This marks the third consecutive year that KIA has received this global honor, which is based on direct passenger feedback.

According to an official release from Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the award is presented by ACI World's globally recognized Airport Service Quality (ASQ) program.

This program evaluates airports worldwide based on several key factors, including comfort, cleanliness, service qual-

ity, and overall convenience.

Passengers have consistently praised KIA for its efficient arrival procedures, highlighting its streamlined immigration and customs checks, high-speed Wi-Fi, and rapid baggage delivery. The seamless arrival process has been a major factor in the airport's continued success in passenger satisfaction.

The airport's cleanliness has also played a crucial role in enhancing the arrival experience, ensuring comfort and convenience for travelers. The ongoing positive feedback from passengers reaffirms KIA's position as a global leader in airport service quality.

CM Siddaramaiah Calls Out Yatnal’s ‘Big Lie’ on Irrigation Funds



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah strongly criticized BJP leader

Basanagouda Patil Yatnal for falsely claiming that the central government allocated Rs 10,000 crore for irrigation projects in

- **CM refutes Yatnal’s Rs 10,000 crore irrigation claim**
- **Karnataka spent over Rs 76,000 crore on ‘guarantee’ schemes**
- **State to increase capital expenditure to Rs 83,000 crore in 2025-26**

the state. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly, Siddaramaiah stated, “The Centre has given only Rs 1,030 crore and not Rs 10,000 crore. I’m not sure if Yatnal thinks this is an RSS meeting.” Addressing the financial status of the Congress-led state government, Siddaramaiah

dismissed opposition claims of bankruptcy. “Since 2023, we have spent over Rs 76,000 crore on guarantee schemes. Is this possible if the government was bankrupt?” he asked. He further outlined that Karnataka’s capital expenditure will rise from Rs 56,000 crore this year to

Rs 83,000 crore in 2025-26. Meanwhile, Home Minister G Parameshwara assured a stronger crackdown on drug trafficking, congratulating Mangaluru police for their record seizure of MDMA worth Rs 75 crore. “We have zero tolerance for drugs,” he stated, with Speaker UT Khader emphasizing the need to investigate collusion at airports. Additionally, Deputy Speaker Rudrapa Lamani has been advised 10 days of complete rest after sustaining spinal and head injuries in a road accident. He remains under observation at Apollo Hospital.

‘Kumaraswamy Must Respond on Land Encroachment Issue’ - Chaluvaryaswamy

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Minister N Chaluvaryaswamy has accused former Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy of illegally encroaching on land near Bidadi for several years. Speaking to the media on Tuesday, Chaluvaryaswamy stated that the court has now ordered the vacating of the encroached land, proving the allegations against Kumaraswamy.

Taking a dig at a Union Minister, Chaluvaryaswamy questioned his silence on the matter. “He was quick to demand the

resignation of Congress ministers over minor issues. Now, when the court has ruled on Kumaraswamy’s illegal encroachment, what does he have to say?” he asked.

Despite the allegations, Chaluvaryaswamy clarified that he would not demand Kumaraswamy’s resignation. “I will not stoop to his level. I am not as greedy as him. But I do expect a response from him,” he remarked.

The allegations and the court’s order have sparked political debate, with the opposition yet to respond officially.

Bellary MLA’s Office Receives Bomb Threat



TPN Correspondent | Bellary

A bomb threat sent to the office of Congress MLA Bharat Reddy of Bellary City constituency created panic on Monday night. The MLA, who was in Bengaluru for the assembly session, immediately informed the Gandhinagar police upon receiving the message on his mobile phone.

Police launched an investigation and detained a youth named Santosh, a resident of Rupanagudi Road in Bellary City, on Tuesday. The search of the MLA’s office confirmed that the threat was a hoax.

Upon interrogation, Santosh admitted to sending the message while under the influence of alcohol.

Santosh, who holds a BBA degree, had reportedly been struggling to find employment. Frustrated with his situation, he allegedly sent the message without fully realizing its consequences. During questioning, he claimed to be a supporter of MLA Bharat Reddy and expressed his disappointment over job-related issues. Police are continuing their investigation to determine if there were any other motives behind the hoax threat.

Karnataka Can Achieve Revenue Surplus If Tax Distribution is Fair - Shivalingegowda

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Congress MLA KM Shivalingegowda, known for his well-prepared speeches in the Legislative Assembly, strongly criticized the Union government’s tax distribution policy. Speaking in the House on Tuesday, he claimed that Karnataka suffers due to the Center’s discriminatory approach in allocating tax revenue.

“The Center is following an unfair policy in the distribution of tax money. Karnataka contributes ₹4.5 lakh crore in taxes, but the state receives only ₹51,000 crore in return. Additionally, the Union government provides a mere ₹16,000 crore in grants,” Shivalingegowda stated.

He argued that if the revenue-sharing model was just and equitable, Karnataka could become



a revenue-surplus state. “The state government is struggling to meet its financial requirements due to this biased distribution. If there is no injustice in tax allocation, Karnataka will not have a fiscal deficit,” he added.

The issue of tax devolution has been a long-standing concern for Karnataka, with multiple governments demanding a larger share of central revenues. Shivalingegowda’s remarks are expected to intensify discussions on the state’s financial autonomy and federal fiscal policies.

Kumaraswamy to Gain the Most from Greater Bengaluru - DK Shivakumar

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar stated that former Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy will be the biggest beneficiary once the Greater Bengaluru project takes shape. Speaking to the media in Bengaluru, Shivakumar confirmed that the cabinet has approved the plan to transform Bengaluru under an international urban development model.

“I have secured cabinet approval to develop Bengaluru into Greater Bengaluru with an international concept. When good work is done, some obstacles will arise, but Kumaras-



wamy will benefit the most from this initiative,” Shivakumar said.

He also announced that the All India Congress Committee (AICC) has scheduled a key meeting on March 27 and 28 near Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, where senior

party leaders, MPs, and District Congress Committee (DCC) office bearers will participate.

Meanwhile, Shivakumar’s recent visit to Delhi remained incomplete as a crucial Supreme Court meeting on inter-state irrigation disputes was

- **Cabinet approves transformation of Bengaluru into ‘Greater Bengaluru’**
- **Initiative to follow an international model for development**
- **AICC meeting scheduled in Ahmedabad on March 27-28**

postponed.

The meeting was intended to address Karnataka’s water-related issues with neighboring states, including Tamil Nadu. Shivakumar revealed that Tamil Nadu officials requested a separate discussion, leading to the postponement.

“We were informed late at night that they could

not attend the scheduled meeting and needed a separate session. As a result, the discussions could not take place,” he stated.

With Karnataka’s urban expansion plans and water disputes gaining political significance, the coming weeks are expected to see intense deliberations on these key issues.

BMRCL Revokes Loco Pilot Recruitment Notification After Kannada Language Controversy

- **BMRCL withdraws job notification amid backlash**
- **Kannada language requirement to be reinstated**
- **Dy CM DK Shivakumar reaffirms priority for Kannadigas**

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has withdrawn its recruitment notification for 50 loco pilot positions following criticism from pro-Kannada organizations and activists. The controversy stemmed from the relaxation of

Kannada language norms, which allowed non-Kannada speakers to apply, provided they learned the language within a year.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar took to social media to confirm the decision, stating that he had directed the BMRCL to review its hiring process and ensure

it aligns with state policies prioritizing Kannadigas.

“Our government stands by the people of Karnataka. The recruitment for Train Operators (Loco Pilots) requiring a minimum of three years’ experience has been withdrawn. I had instructed BMRCL to review the hiring process and ensure state policies are followed, securing rightful opportunities for Kannadigas,” Shivakumar posted on X.

The March 12 notification had sparked protests, with Kannada Development Authority Chairman Purushothama Bilimale and local groups arguing



that it disadvantaged native job seekers in favor of candidates from other states. BMRCL is now expected to revise the re-

cruitment norms to align with Karnataka’s employment policies, ensuring fair opportunities for local candidates.

Former Minister HM Revanna Accused of Assaulting Congress Worker

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Former Minister and Guarantee Implementation Committee President HM Revanna has been accused of assaulting a Congress worker, with a complaint filed against him at the High Grounds Police Station in Bengaluru. The alleged incident took place at Kumarakrupa Guest House on March 17.

Congress worker Nandini Nagaraj has claimed that Revanna assaulted



her during an altercation, prompting her to ap-

proach the police. Based on her complaint, the po-

lice have registered a case and issued a notice to her for further investigation.

Responding to the allegations, Revanna clarified his stance with Media. “The woman was creating a disturbance and repeatedly mentioning Rahul Gandhi. I did not even see who she was. She was making a scene, and when she tried to record a video, I pushed the phone away.

None of us attacked her,” he stated.

Revanna also made counter-allegations against the complainant, claiming that she had received ₹1 lakh via PhonePe in connection with an officer’s transfer. “If I have done anything wrong, I am ready to face punishment,” he added.

The case has sparked controversy, with political circles closely watching how the investigation unfolds.

Anganwadi Workers Protest Outside Kerala

TPN Correspondent | Thiruvananthapuram

Following the ongoing protest by Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers, a section of Anganwadi workers on Tuesday launched an indefinite protest outside the Secretariat, demanding a hike in their minimum wages and post-retirement benefits.

ASHA workers have been demonstrating for over 36 days, demanding post-retirement benefits and an increase in their honorarium. They alleged that those who retired after working for

over 40 years do not receive any pension, despite a deduction of ₹500 from their monthly wages for retirement benefits. The workers also claimed they often have to cover Anganwadi expenses from their own pockets.

On Monday, ASHA workers intensified their protest by blocking the Secretariat's main gate till evening. They also announced an indefinite hunger strike from March 20, with three of their leaders participating as part of the third phase of their agitation.

Although the protesting

workers acknowledged the state government's recent order relaxing 10 eligibility criteria for receiving an honorarium, they stated that their protest would continue until their major demands were met. The Kerala government has cited the lack of financial support from the central government under the National Health Mission (NHM) for 2023-24 as a reason for the delay in meeting their demands. However, the central government refuted these claims, stating that it has provided the required funds but is awaiting Ker-

ala's utilisation certificate before releasing additional payments.

Union Health Minister J. P. Nadda recently informed Parliament that the Mission Steering Group of the NHM has decided to increase incentives for ASHA workers. However, the protesting workers insist that immediate action is necessary to address their financial struggles. The indefinite protests by Anganwadi and ASHA workers continue, highlighting the growing unrest among grassroots health and childcare workers in Kerala.



Kannur Airport Land Acquisition Progress

- Phase 1 land handed over
- Phase 2 acquisition ongoing
- Runway extension under review
- Special package for evictees

TPN Correspondent | Kannur

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has assured that the land acquisition process for Kannur International Airport will be completed without delays. He emphasized that necessary steps are being taken to resolve any issues related to the acquisition. Responding to submissions by Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan and K.V. Sumesh in the Assembly, Mr. Vijayan acknowledged the urgency of the matter. He noted that

the issue has been consistently raised by Mattanur MLA K.K. Shailaja. He stated that in the first phase, 1,113.33 acres of land had already been acquired and handed over to Kannur International Airport Limited (KIAL). The second phase, involving the acquisition of 804.37 acres, is currently underway. In addition to the airport expansion, a new industrial park is planned as part of the project. Of the 1,970.05 hectares required for this, 21.81 hectares from Kolari and Keezhallur villag-



es have already been acquired and handed over to the Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA). Further, funds have been allocated for acquiring an additional 202.34 hectares in Keezhoor and Pattanur villages, and necessary steps are being taken to complete the process.

For the proposed extension of the airport's

runway to 4,000 meters, 245.33 acres of land in Keezhallur village have been notified. A ₹900 crore proposal, including ₹750 crore for runway extension and ₹150 crore for rehabilitation, has been submitted by the Kannur District Collector and is currently under government review. The Government Engineering College, Kozhikode, is conducting

a valuation of buildings in the affected areas. So far, 39 structures have been assessed, with ₹3,70,466 allocated for the process. The valuation of the remaining 162 structures is pending. Since there is no provision for land allotment in exchange for evictions, the District Collector has been instructed to propose a special rehabilitation package.

Administrative approval has been granted to acquire the properties of 14 displaced families, and the District Collector has been directed to submit a detailed report. The Chief Minister reiterated that all necessary actions will be taken within a set timeframe to ensure the smooth progress of the Kannur airport development project.

Two Students Die After Consuming Contaminated

TPN Correspondent | Mandya

The death toll in the Malavalli food poisoning incident has risen to two as another student succumbed while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Mysuru. The latest victim, identified as Nami Banthai, was among the students who fell ill after consuming contaminated food during Holi celebrations.

Two days ago, a 13-year-old student named Kerlong also died due to the same incident. Both students hailed from Meghalaya. In total, around 40 students suffered food poisoning after eating food prepared by a hotel and distributed by a businessman. Five students in critical condition were admitted to a private hospital for advanced treatment.

Following the incident, authorities intensified the investigation. The hotel that supplied the contaminated food has been sealed, and multiple arrests have been made, including the hotel owner, the hostel warder, and the school management secretary.

Officials have emphasized the need for stricter food safety regulations in educational institutions. The tragedy has raised concerns about the quality of food provided to students, prompting calls for regular inspections and strict action against violators.



Sri Lankan Navy Arrests Three Indian Fishermen



TPN Correspondent | Rameswaram

The Sri Lankan Navy arrested three Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu's Ramanathapuram district on Tuesday for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL). Their mechanized fishing boat was also

seized during the operation.

According to sources, the fishermen, who are residents of Thangachimadam, set sail from Rameswaram on Monday night. In the early hours of Tuesday, while patrolling near Neduntheevu (Delft Island), the Sri Lankan

Navy spotted the boat and found it to have allegedly trespassed into their territorial waters. As a result, the fishermen were taken into custody, and their boat was confiscated. This incident is part of a series of ongoing arrests, as Indian fishermen frequently get caught crossing into Sri Lankan waters. The absence of clearly marked maritime boundaries and the depletion of fish stocks in Indian waters often force fishermen to venture further into the sea, sometimes unknowingly entering Sri Lankan territory.

Fishermen's associations in Tamil Nadu have strongly condemned the arrest and urged the In-

dian government to intervene diplomatically. They have reiterated their demand for a permanent solution to the issue, which has affected the livelihood of thousands of fishermen. Many have called for negotiations between India and Sri Lanka to establish a sustainable fishing agreement, ensuring that Indian fishermen do not face repeated arrests and boat seizures. Tamil Nadu authorities are closely monitoring the situation and are expected to take necessary steps to secure the release of the detained fishermen. Political leaders from the state have also voiced their concerns, urging the central government to engage in

discussions with Sri Lankan officials to prevent such incidents in the future. Meanwhile, the families of the arrested fishermen are in distress, fearing for their safety. They have appealed to the government for immediate action to bring their loved ones back home. This is not the first time Indian fishermen have been detained by the Sri Lankan Navy. Similar incidents have occurred frequently, leading to strained relations between the fishing communities of both countries. Fishermen are now demanding that the government take stronger measures to protect their rights and ensure their safety at sea.

Tamil Nadu's Government Railway Police strength

TPN Correspondent | Tamil Nadu

There is an urgent need to increase the manpower of GRP by 50% to give a sense of safety and security to railway passengers in Tamil Nadu.

While the number of trains and passengers have increased phenomenally over the years in the Southern Railway, the strength of the Government Railway Police (GRP) has remained unchanged since 1989. Despite increasing threat perceptions and responsibilities in safeguarding the life

and property of passengers, not a single police constable has been added to the force. In its final report submitted to Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, the Tamil Nadu Fifth Police Commission said there was an urgent need to increase the manpower of GRP by 50% to give a sense of safety and security to railway passengers in the State. Tamil Nadu government may prevail upon the railway authorities to enhance the strength and also bear 50% of the expenditure on the cost.

Kerala Tailor, 59, Reaches Everest Base Camp With YouTube Training

TPN Correspondent | Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: In an inspiring achievement, 59-year-old Vasanthi Cheruveetil, a tailor from Kerala, reached Everest Base Camp solo without any formal training. Relying on YouTube tutorials to learn trekking techniques and Hindi for communication, she successfully completed her journey on February 23, 2025.

Starting from Surke, Nepal, on February 15, she endured a challenging trek and reached the 5,364-meter-high base camp, proudly draping a Kerala 'kasavu' saree over her trekking gear and waving the Indian flag.

Ms. Cheruveetil trained rigorously for four months, walking three hours every morning and trekking 5-6 km in the evenings to build endurance. Despite skepticism from others, she remained determined, funding her expedition through her tailoring business with occasional support from her sons.

Her journey was not without challenges. After her flight to Lukla was canceled, a German couple helped her hire a porter to navigate the treacherous terrain. To counter altitude sickness, she walked slowly, taking frequent breaks. On her

return, she fulfilled another dream by taking a helicopter ride from Gorak Shep to Lukla.

This is not her first solo adventure. In May 2024, she defied societal norms with a solo trip to Thailand. Now, she dreams of visiting the Great Wall of China, embracing her adventurous spirit despite approaching 60.

Ms. Cheruveetil, who lost her husband a year and a half ago to Alzheimer's,

continues to inspire with her fearless attitude and determination.



Image Instagrammed by Vasanthi Cheruveetil



RSS @ 100: An Unstoppable Journey – Part I

Over the span of a century, many political parties and organizations have emerged and faded away, yet the RSS has continually grown, a phenomenon made possible by genuine public acceptance and aspiration.

As the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) approaches its centenary celebrations, my wishes to feature this unique National organization's formation, ideals, and goals in a three-part series. The RSS's contribution to the nation is immeasurable—an indisputable fact. This series aims to address apprehensions among some sections regarding its entrenched controversies.

A century ago, a small stream in a lesser-known area of Nagpur, Maharashtra, grew into a powerful river the RSS reaching every corner of our nation. The rise in Sangh shakhas, now surpassing 57,000, showcases the organization's expanding influence. Like the Vamana Avatar of Lord Mahavishnu, which teaches that power is not always about size but about restoring balance and righteousness, the RSS has grown to become a transformative force for the nation and the world. The Congress and Mahatma Gandhi's support for the Khilafat Movement (1919-1924) marked a significant turning point in Indian history. During this period, they failed to gauge the sentiments of Hindus, many of whom felt marginalized. This oversight contributed to the rise of nationalist movements, including the RSS.

The nation's freedom movement was transformed into a political party by congress party but it lacked a strong organizational framework. It began developing ideologies to win elections and hold onto power.

The Congress, under Nehru's leadership, feared that the RSS, with its clear ideology and strong organizational structure, could become a formidable political force. As a result, the organization faced repeated bans and its leaders endured public



Dr. Buragadda Srinadh

humiliation. Though falsely implicated in Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, the RSS was banned three times post-independence. However, with unwavering public support, it continued to grow steadily. RSS swayamsevaks have consistently risen to the occasion during national crises, whether natural disasters or human-induced challenges. Their humanitarian assistance to refugees returning from Pakistan earned them widespread

The root cause of its growth is the spirit, sacrifice and selflessness of millions of patriotic Indians.

recognition. Many Congress leaders acknowledged the good work of the RSS. In October 1948, the Congress Working Committee initially allowed RSS members to join Congress. However, Nehru opposed this move and later ensured that RSS members were denied membership unless they renounced their affiliation. Nehru's hostility towards the RSS persisted throughout Congress's six-decade rule at the central and state levels. RSS members were often labeled extremists and anti-social elements, facing false accusations and persecution. Yet, truth endures—attempts to suppress it only make it emerge stronger. The RSS's core ideology has resonated with millions of patriotic Indians. Disillusionment with Congress and regional parties grew as they disregarded Hindu sentiments, distorted history, and attempted to erase Indian heritage. As public discontent grew, the RSS emerged as a guardian of national identity, much like Lord Krishna revealing his divine

form at a critical juncture in the Kurukshetra battle. Today, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh has approximately 5 to 6 million active members in India, demonstrating a robust grassroots presence. With this strength, the Sangh Parivar has become an influential force shaping Indian politics and society. Through its extensive network of affiliated groups, the RSS plays a crucial role in fostering societal transformation, guided by its unwavering ideology:

“Param Vaibhavam Tumhe Tat Swarashtram” – A commitment to elevating the motherland to greater heights.

For the welfare of society and the country, a great number of people have sacrificed pleasures, quit their jobs and families, stayed single, and worked as humble RSS workers without expecting recognition or renown. Millions of patriotic Indians were moved by this commitment and selflessness.

As the world's largest non-governmental organization, the RSS boasts 200 million members in India alone. After the United Nations, the RSS is the only organization globally recognized by the UN for its human welfare programs. Spread across 39 countries, including Europe and Arab nations, the RSS first expanded beyond India in 1947 with a branch in Kenya. With 580 branches in Nepal, it has the highest presence outside India, followed by the United States, with 146 branches. Internationally, the RSS is known as Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), dedicated to promoting Hindu culture, traditions, and history worldwide. Today, an RSS member can proudly proclaim his affiliation anywhere in the world. India's highest offices—including the President, Prime Minister, Vice President, and Lok Sabha Speaker—are all held by individuals shaped by the RSS. As the RSS marks its 100th year, its journey remains unstoppable, influencing the nation's destiny with an unwavering commitment to service, unity, and national pride.

(To be concluded) (The author is the President of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh)

AAP's Patchy Performance in Punjab: A Mixed Report Card

As the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab completes three years in power, it finds itself under scrutiny over its performance. While the ruling party claims significant achievements, opposition parties argue that it has failed on multiple fronts. The reality lies somewhere in between. AAP's historic win in the 2022 elections had raised expectations, as the party swept aside established political forces like the Congress, the Shiromani Akali Dal, and the BJP. However, delivering on its ambitious promises has proved challenging. One of the biggest concerns remains Punjab's ongoing drug crisis. Despite Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's aggressive crackdown, the state's vision of becoming drug-free in three months remains far from reality.

Corruption Crackdown and Political Gambles

In an effort to maintain its anti-corruption image—especially after alle-



gations in Delhi dented its credibility—AAP has intensified its campaign against graft. The Vigilance Bureau's crackdown on corrupt officials, including revenue officers, has sent a strong message. However, it has also sparked resistance from government employees. In a bold political move, Mann has not hesitated to confront Punjab's farmers—one of the state's most influential voter groups. Unlike previous governments that avoided direct confrontation, AAP has taken a firm stand on certain farm-related issues. This deci-

sion carries significant risks ahead of the 2027 elections, particularly in the rural heartland.

Security Concerns and Political Challenges

Law and order remain a major concern, with a series of bomb and grenade attacks adding to the state's unrest. Ensuring security while maintaining political stability will be a key test for the government moving forward. Meanwhile, AAP's national convener, Arvind Kejriwal, has increased his focus on Punjab following the party's significant electoral setback in Delhi. Both Kejriwal and Mann are aware that any misstep now could hurt their long-term prospects. With two more years left in its term, the AAP government faces mounting challenges. Its ability to deliver on governance, fight corruption, and restore public confidence will determine its fate in the next elections.

The Fight for Federalism and Telugu Language Representation

India's strength lies in its diversity, and the federal structure is the foundation of our democracy. However, in recent years, we have witnessed a steady erosion of federal principles through various policy decisions by the central government. From demonetization to the three black laws against farmers, NRC, CAA, Waqf laws, ONOP, NEP, delimitation, GST, and the controversial three-language formula—each of these decisions has challenged the very essence of federalism.

It is disappointing that Chandrababu Naidu (CBN), who once positioned himself as a champion of state rights, has chosen to align with the central government's anti-federal policies. His endorsement of the three-language formula is particularly concerning at a time when people across the country are resisting the imposition of Hindi. Andhra Pradesh was the first state formed on a linguistic basis, and we, as Telugu people, must stand firm in defending our language and cultural identity.

The Need for Telugu Representation
Language is not just a means of communication; it is deeply tied to our history, heritage, and identity. The Telugu-speaking population has a significant presence across India, particularly in Hindi-speaking states. Yet, their linguistic needs are often ignored. During the recent Kumbh Mela, Telugu pilgrims faced great difficulty due to the absence of Telugu signboards. The same issue exists in Ayodhya, where thousands of Telugu devotees visit every year, yet there is no recognition of their language. I call upon Mr. Naidu to write to Union Minister Nitin



Kolanu Konda Shivaji
Vice President, APCC

Gadkari, demanding that Telugu nameplates be installed on National Highway signboards in Hindi-speaking states. Similarly, the Congress party urges that Telugu be made a mandatory second language in these states to safeguard the interests of Telugu-speaking people. Furthermore, railway stations in Hindi-speaking regions must have Telugu name boards to ensure easier navigation for Telugu travelers.

A Call for Collective Action
The fight for federalism is also a fight for linguistic dignity. The central government must recognize that India is a multilingual nation and ensure that no language is unfairly imposed upon others. The Congress party will continue to push for policies that uphold the spirit of federalism and protect the linguistic rights of Telugu-speaking people. It is time for all leaders, regardless of political affiliation, to prioritize the interests of their people over their political alliances. The preservation of our language and the respect for federalism should not be negotiable. We will not remain silent as our rights are diluted. The fight for Telugu representation is a fight for justice, and we will persist until our demands are met.

PM Modi's Latest Podcast: A Masterclass in Tech-Driven Outreach



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has once again demonstrated his ability to adapt and leverage emerging communication trends, this time through the podcasting medium. Over the past two months, Modi has engaged in nearly five hours of deep discussions on various topics, ranging from his personal life, political philosophy, and governance strategies to domestic and international affairs.

In his most recent appearance on American podcaster and AI researcher Lex Fridman's show, Modi participated in an extensive three-hour discussion. This followed his previous two-hour-long conversation with Nikhil Kamath, the co-founder of Zerodha. Both hosts are highly regarded figures, particularly among younger audiences, adding credibility and depth to the discussions. Fridman, who announced the episode to his 46 million social media followers, described it as “one of the most powerful conversations” of his life.

Innovative Communication Strategy

Modi's adoption of podcasts marks a shift in his outreach strategy. Unlike traditional media interviews, podcasts allow long-form, in-depth conversations that cater to a more diverse audience, including those disillusioned with mainstream media. This format has enabled Modi to address sensitive topics, such as the role of the RSS, the 2002 Gujarat riots, and India's geopolitical stance on China, Pakistan, and the Russia-Ukraine war, in an informal yet comprehensive manner. His embrace of technology extends beyond podcasts. He has used AI-powered voice translation to make his speeches accessible in multiple languages, ensuring wider reach. Similarly, his governance initiatives, such as the JAM trinity (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar, and Mobile), reflect his focus on leveraging technology for efficiency and transparency.

Digital-First Approach

Modi's innovative outreach techniques have been evident throughout his political career. As Gujarat's Chief Minister, he pioneered the use of holograms for campaign rallies. Before the 2014 elections, he engaged party workers through an "Audio Bridge" and connected with voters via the interactive “Chai pe Charcha” sessions.

Will begin linking Voter ID card with Aadhaar: EC

- UIDAI and EC's technical experts to start consultations soon
- Govt says linking is voluntary, no deletion of names for non-linking

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday announced that the linkage of voter cards with Aadhaar would be carried out in accordance with prevailing laws and Supreme Court directions. The poll body also confirmed that technical consultations between UIDAI and its experts would commence soon for the exercise. The EC held a high-level meeting with Union Home Secretary, Legislative Secretary from the Law Ministry, MeitY Secretary, and the UIDAI CEO to discuss the process of voter card-Aadhaar seeding. The move comes as part of efforts to streamline voter authentication while ensuring compliance with legal provisions. The poll authority clarified that while Aadhaar establishes a person's identity, voting rights can only be granted to Indian citizens under Article 326 of the Constitution. "The linking of elector photo identity card (EPIC) with Aadhaar will be done only as per the provisions of Article 326 of the Constitution, sections 23(4), 23(5), and 23(6) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950,



and in line with the Supreme Court judgment of 2023," the EC stated. The government has reiterated that the Aadhaar-voter ID linkage is a voluntary process and no voter's name will be deleted from the electoral rolls for not linking their Aadhaar details. The law, under the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021, al-

lows electoral registration officers to seek Aadhaar details from voters to establish identity, but only on a voluntary basis. While there is no set deadline for the linkage, the government has assured that the process-driven exercise will be carried out in a systematic manner without any mandatory enforcement.

"You Remain Close to Our Hearts": PM Modi's Letter to Sunita Williams



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has written a heartfelt letter to Indian-origin NASA astronaut Sunita Williams, who began her return journey to Earth on Sunday after being stranded on the International Space Station (ISS) for over nine months. In his letter, dated March 1 and shared by Union Minister Jitendra Singh on X, PM Modi expressed India's pride in her achievements and acknowledged the challenges she faced during her extended stay in space. He mentioned that he had inquired about her well-being during his

meetings with former US President Donald Trump and current President Joe Biden. "We discussed how proud we are of you and your work. Following this interaction, I could not stop myself from writing to you," the Prime Minister wrote, referring to a recent conversation with former NASA astronaut Mike Massimino in Delhi. Highlighting the admiration of 1.4 billion Indians for her perseverance, PM Modi also extended his regards to her family. "Your mother, Bonnie Pandya, must be keenly awaiting your return. I am sure that Late Deepakbhai's blessings are with you as well," he said, recalling his 2016

meeting with her and her father, Deepak Pandya, a native of Gujarat who passed away in 2020. PM Modi assured her that the entire nation was praying for her safe return. "Even though you are thousands of miles away, you continue to remain close to our hearts. The people of India are praying for your good health and success in your mission," he wrote. The Prime Minister also invited her to visit India upon her return, calling her "one of its most illustrious daughters." Sunita Williams' Extended Mission in Space Sunita Williams and fellow astronaut Butch Wilmore flew to the ISS on June 5, 2023, aboard Boeing's Starliner spacecraft for what was initially planned as a short-duration test mission. However, due to propulsion issues, the spacecraft was deemed unfit to bring them back, leading to an uncrewed return of the vehicle. NASA reassigned the astronauts to the Crew-9 mission, reducing the incoming crew size to accommodate them on the ISS. Their long-awaited homecoming was made possible after Crew-10 docked with the station on Sunday, allowing them to return along with NASA astronaut Nick Hague and Roscosmos cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov. The journey back to Earth marks the end of an unexpectedly prolonged stay for Williams, who has now completed her third mission in space.

Home Ministry Says No Central Data on Maha Kumbh Stampede Deaths

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Six weeks after the deadly stampede at the Maha Kumbh in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, the Union Home Ministry informed the Lok Sabha that it has not conducted an inquiry into the incident and does not maintain data on the number of casualties. Responding to a question from Congress MPs KC Venugopal and Kirsan Namdeo, Junior Home Minister Nityanand Rai stated that handling such disasters and providing financial aid to affected families falls under the purview of the respective state governments. "State governments are competent to deal with such situations. No such data is maintained centrally," Rai said, clarifying that 'public order' and 'police' are state subjects. He added that organizing religious congregations and crowd management are closely linked to 'public order,' making it the responsibility of the state government to investigate and respond to the tragedy. The stampede, which occurred on January 29, resulted in at least 30 deaths and left



60 others injured, according to Vaibhav Krishna, the senior Uttar Pradesh police officer in charge of security during the event. Venugopal and Namdeo had sought details on the exact number of casualties and the steps taken to probe the cause of the stampede. In response, Rai pointed out that the National Disaster Management Authority and the Bureau of Police Research and Development had issued detailed crowd management guidelines, which were circulated to all states. The Ministry of Home Affairs also advised all states and Union Territories to create their own Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) based on these templates.

The tragic incident has sparked a major political row, with the opposition, led by Samajwadi Party chief and former UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, attacking the central government. Yadav criticized the administration for its handling of the situation, citing the massive 300-km-long traffic jam that left thousands of devotees stranded. "Is this 'Viksit Bharat'? The government cannot even manage traffic. What is the point of going to the Moon when we cannot settle issues on Earth?" Yadav questioned in Parliament. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee also joined the criticism, referring to the event as 'Mrityu Kumbh' (Death Kumbh) and demanding clarity on the actual number of casualties. The issue was reignited today when Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke about the success of the Maha Kumbh, which took place between January 13 and February 26. His speech, however, made no mention of the stampede or the people who lost their lives, prompting strong reactions from the opposition.



Six SC Judges to Visit Manipur Relief Camps, Meet Displaced People

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Six Supreme Court judges will visit relief camps in Manipur on March 22 to assess the condition of internally displaced people and strengthen legal and humanitarian support in the violence-hit state, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) announced. The visiting judges include Justice BR Gavai, who also serves as NALSA's Executive Chairman, along with Justices Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, MM Sundresh, KV Viswanathan, and N Kotiswar Singh. Their visit comes nearly two years after the sectarian violence of May 3, 2023, which resulted in hundreds of deaths and the displacement of over 50,000 people. Many of them continue to live in relief camps, highlighting the ongoing need for legal and humanitarian aid. During the visit, Justice Gavai will virtually inaugurate legal services and medical camps in all districts of Manipur and open legal aid clinics in Imphal East, Imphal West, and Ukhrul. The judges will also distribute relief materials to displaced individuals. NALSA stated that these legal service camps aim to connect the displaced population with government welfare programs, ensuring access to crucial benefits such as healthcare, pensions, employment schemes, and the reconstruction of lost identity documents. Additionally, each participating state department will outline at least five key schemes tailored to support those affected by the crisis. A team of 25 specialized doctors from Chennai will also set up medical camps in all relief centers, providing sustained healthcare support for six days. They will offer treatment and essential medicines to displaced families. NALSA has played a crucial role in assisting communities affected by the Manipur violence, having set up 273 special legal aid clinics in relief camps. These clinics have helped people regain access to government benefits, retrieve lost documents, and receive medical assistance. The upcoming visit by the Supreme Court judges underscores NALSA's commitment to justice, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable communities. By bridging the gap between legal rights and accessibility, NALSA aims to ensure that every displaced person receives the necessary support to rebuild their lives with dignity. The visit by the Supreme Court judges coincides with the bi-centennial event of the Manipur High Court on March 22.

"Uddhav Thackeray Bowed Before PM Modi": Eknath Shinde's Big Claim



TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has claimed that former Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had "bowed down" before Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking relief from investigating agencies. Speaking in the Legislative Council, Shinde alleged that Thackeray had traveled to Delhi, expressed willingness to form a coalition government with the BJP, but later changed his stance upon returning to Maharashtra. Shinde further accused Thackeray's Shiv Sena UBT of forsaking the ideals of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and embracing what he called the "Aurangzebi ideology" by joining hands with Congress. He emphasized that his faction had "freed the bow and arrow," referring to the Shiv Sena symbol, which had come under dispute following the party split. "We have never been tempted by power and position. Our priority has always been addressing the issues of the people who entrusted us with responsibility," Shinde asserted. His remarks come amid renewed political tensions after Shiv Sena UBT MP Sanjay Raut claimed that Shinde himself had once sought to join the Congress. "I know what was happening. If Ahmed Patel were alive today, he could confirm it. You can ask Prithviraj Chavan about it," Raut had said. The controversy follows Maharashtra Congress leader Nana Patole's recent remarks during Holi celebrations, where he suggested that Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar could switch to the opposition in exchange for a rotational chief ministerial post.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy arrives in Finland, will meet defence industry



- Talks with Alexander Stubb to discuss defense cooperation and support for Ukraine.
- Discussions on advancing peace and strengthening the defense industry.
- Visit coincides with Trump’s negotiations with Putin on a potential ceasefire.

TPN Correspondent | Helsinki

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has arrived in Helsinki for an official visit to Finland, ahead of a key meeting with Finnish President Alexander Stubb on Wednesday. The two leaders are set to discuss Finland's continued support for Ukraine in the wake of Russia's ongoing invasion and efforts to end the conflict. The discussions

will include potential measures to advance peace and strengthen cooperation, particularly in defense, with a focus on the defense industry.

The visit comes as US President Donald Trump is engaged in talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, attempting to negotiate a ceasefire and a more permanent resolution to the three-year-long war between Russia and Ukraine.

Zelenskyy's schedule in Finland will also include discussions with other key officials, such as Finland's finance, defense, and foreign ministers, as well as a meeting with Prime Minister Petteri Orpo and parliament speaker Jussi Halla-aho. The Ukrainian president's wife, Olena Zelenska, is accompanying him on the trip and will be visiting local schools alongside Suzanne Innes-Stubb,

the wife of Finland's president.

This marks Zelenskyy's second visit to Finland since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, highlighting the ongoing international diplomatic efforts aimed at bringing an end to the conflict. Finland, a NATO member, has been a staunch ally of Ukraine in the fight against Russian aggression, providing significant military and humanitarian aid.

Trump Engages in Critical Talks with Putin Over Ukraine Conflict

Trump-Putin Call On Ending Russia-Ukraine War Continues For Over 2 Hours

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Nearly three weeks after a tumultuous meeting with Ukraine's President Zelensky at the White House, US President Donald Trump has reached out to Russian President Vladimir Putin in a fresh attempt to broker an end to the ongoing war in Ukraine. The phone call, which began at 10 a.m. Eastern Time, has been ongoing for over two hours, with the White House reporting that "the call is going well, and still in progress."

Both leaders are discussing potential solutions to secure a ceasefire in the Eastern European conflict, which has already claimed tens of thousands of lives and has been raging for more than three years. Trump has expressed his readiness to negotiate with Putin on terms for Russian control over certain parts of Ukraine, including the division of "certain assets," as he mentioned over the weekend.

However, the prospect of dividing up Ukrainian territory has raised concerns in Europe, particularly regarding the future of Ukraine and the risk of Moscow gaining too much leverage. European leaders are anxious that Trump, who has previously voiced admiration for Putin, may concede too much to Russia without consulting Ukraine.

In the aftermath of Trump's previous



meeting with Zelensky, Ukraine agreed to temporarily halt military operations for 30 days and engage in dialogue with Russia. However, Putin has set stringent conditions, which Moscow insists are non-negotiable. Ukraine, in response, has demanded an "unconditional" ceasefire, with Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga stressing the importance of Russia showing genuine intentions for peace.

President Putin has doubled down on Moscow's demands, firmly stating that

Russia would not accept NATO troops in Ukraine and reaffirming that any ceasefire deal would be contingent on NATO halting arms supplies to Ukraine. Putin has also stated that Russia's forces are "steadily advancing" and has made it clear that any peace deal would need to reflect these advances.

As Trump continues his talks with Putin, the fate of the conflict and the potential for peace remains uncertain. The results of this crucial phone call are eagerly awaited by both global leaders and citizens alike.

Three Earthquakes Strike Indonesia, Causing Casualties and Damage

TPN Correspondent | Jakarta

On Tuesday, Indonesia was rocked by three significant earthquakes, including a 5.5-magnitude tremor that hit North Sumatra province in the morning. The other two quakes, with magnitudes of 5.7 and 5.2, struck Maluku and East Nusa Tenggara provinces earlier in the day, according to the country's Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency.

The 5.5-magnitude earthquake in North Sumatra occurred at 5:22 a.m. local time, with its epicenter located 17 kilometers southeast of North Tapanuli Regency, at a depth of 10 kilometers. The quake resulted in one fatality and left another person injured. In addition, several houses and a road were severely damaged, making the road impassable. Sri Wahyuni Pancasilawati, head of the emergency and logistics unit at North Sumatra's Provincial Disaster Management Agency, stated that risk assessments were ongoing.



Earlier, a 5.7-magnitude earthquake struck Maluku province at 00:32 a.m. local time, initially recorded as a 6.0 magnitude before being revised downward. Just ten minutes later, another earthquake, registering a 5.2 magnitude, hit East Nusa Tenggara province. Fortunately, no tsunami alerts were issued, as the tremors were not expected to generate large waves.

Indonesia, located along the seismically active Pacific Ring of Fire, is no stranger to frequent earthquakes. The country has 127 active volcanoes and is particularly vulnerable to earthquakes and tsunamis. The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, triggered by a massive 9.1-magnitude earthquake off the west coast of Sumatra, killed over 165,000 people. Similarly, a tsunami in 2006 struck the south coast of Java, killing more than 600 people.

Due to its geological setting, Indonesia remains highly susceptible to both earthquakes and tsunamis, posing ongoing risks to the archipelago's coastal communities.

Tulsi Gabbard: Trump’s ‘America First’ Policy Should Not Be Misunderstood as Isolation



TPN Correspondent | US

US Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, clarified on Tuesday that President Donald Trump's "America First" policy should not be interpreted as a stance of isolation. Speaking at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, Gabbard emphasized the importance of expanding the India-US relationship, calling it a "huge opportunity" for both nations.

Gabbard explained that while President Trump's approach focuses on prioritizing American interests, it should not be seen as America turning inward. She drew a parallel to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "India First" approach, as-

serting that both leaders are committed to their respective countries while fostering strong global partnerships. "It should not be misunderstood that 'America First' means America alone," Gabbard stated, adding that the US and India share a strong friendship and that the bilateral ties will continue to grow.

Reflecting on the recent meeting between Prime Minister Modi and President Trump in Washington DC, Gabbard described it as a "reconnection of two old friends" and underscored the growing cooperation between the two nations. She also praised the Raisina Dialogue as an essential platform for open discussions on global issues, providing opportunities for direct dialogue between nations on the most pressing matters.

Touching on broader geopolitical issues, Gabbard highlighted President Trump's unwavering commitment to peace and security. She reiterated that Trump's approach is centered on securing peace through strength, noting that Trump has also voiced strong support for ending ongoing conflicts, including the war in Ukraine.

The Raisina Dialogue, held from March 17-19, serves as India's premier conference on geopolitics and geoeconomics, organized by the Observer Research Foundation in partnership with the Ministry of External Affairs. Gabbard's remarks further solidified the growing collaboration between India and the US, particularly in security and intelligence-sharing.

"Stop The Killing": Families Of Hostages To Israel PM After Strike On Gaza



TPN Correspondent | Jerusalem

The families of Israeli captives held in Gaza have demanded that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intervene immediately to stop the killing and disappearance of hostages now! First, return them -- then everything else," the statement read.

In a statement, the Hostages and Missing Families Forum called for a meeting with Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and the head of the negotiation team to discuss how Israel plans to protect the hos-

tages from military actions and work toward their release. "The families of the hostages will demand: Stop the killing and disappearance of the hostages now! First, return them -- then everything else," the statement read.

The families also announced plans to protest outside Netanyahu's office in Jerusalem later on Tuesday, as their calls for meetings with key officials have so far gone unanswered. They expressed frustration, saying that government officials had ignored their pleas for a discussion, and now it appears they were planning to escalate military action, which could endanger the lives of the captives.

Israel's recent airstrikes on Gaza have been its most intense since the ceasefire on January 19, following the brutal October 2023 Hamas attack that led to the abduction of 251 Israelis. Of those taken, 58 remain in Gaza, and the Israeli military reports that 34 of the hostages are believed to have died.

The families are urging Netanyahu's government to focus on bringing the hostages back safely, asserting that their return must be prioritized before any further military escalation. The growing tension between the ongoing conflict and the efforts to secure the captives' release has left families in anguish, calling for decisive action from Israel's leadership.

Stock markets surge as bulls take charge after consolidation

After a period of consolidation, the domestic stock markets witnessed a strong rally on Tuesday, closing with significant gains. Investor sentiment turned highly positive as expectations grew that the US Federal Reserve would maintain interest rates. Additionally, positive global cues and the availability of fundamentally strong stocks at attractive prices encouraged investors to adopt a buy-on-dips strategy. The result was an unrelenting surge in benchmark indices from the opening bell to the closing session.

The BSE Sensex, which had closed at 74,169 in the previous session, opened higher at 74,608 and maintained upward momentum throughout the day. It touched an intraday high of 75,385 before settling at 75,301 with a remarkable gain of 1,131 points. Similarly, the NSE Nifty opened at 22,662, reached a high of 22,857, and ended the session at 22,834, marking an impressive increase of 325 points. The Nifty Bank index also rallied, climbing 960 points to close at 49,314.

Investor enthusiasm was evident in the broad market participation, with 2,288 stocks advancing on the NSE compared to 646 declining, while 82 stocks remained unchanged. The bullish momentum was reflected across all sectoral indices, with media and realty stocks soaring by 3%, while the auto, public sector banks, and metals sectors registered gains of over 2%. Stocks from banking, finance, and consumption segments also played a crucial role in driving the indices higher.

Among the top gainers in the Nifty50 were ICICI Bank, Larsen & Toubro, Shriram Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Tata Motors, while Bajaj



Finserv, Tech Mahindra, and Bharti Airtel emerged as the day's biggest losers. The rupee strengthened by 23 paise to close at 86.56 against the US dollar, reflecting increased investor confidence. Steel and metal stocks, particularly Hindalco, played a key role in pushing Nifty to a one-month high.

Several corporate developments influenced market movements. Paytm Money received SEBI approval for registration as a research analyst, while PB Fintech continued its upward rally for the second consecutive day. Stocks such as Uttam Sugar, Mobikwik, TT, Sindhutrade, and Hind Rectifiers hit the 20% upper circuit. CG Power's board approved an interim dividend of ₹1.30 per share, while a major block deal involving 27 lakh shares took place in Jio Financial. Tech Mahindra announced a strategic partnership with Google Cloud, and Bajaj Finserv revealed its plan to acquire Allianz's 26% stake in Bajaj Allianz Life. Meanwhile, Varun Bev-

erages surged 5% amid expectations of increased demand in the summer season, and 20 lakh shares were exchanged in Tata Steel.

The bullish rally indicates strong market momentum, with investor confidence driving key indices higher. With favorable economic cues and robust sectoral performance, markets are expected to maintain their positive trajectory in the coming sessions.

1. Torrent Power Ltd



The company secured a 1,200 MW renewable energy project from the Gujarat government. Plans to invest ₹5,500 crore in green energy expansion over the next three years. Jef-

eries has maintained a 'Buy' rating with a target price of ₹1,750, citing strong cash flows and expansion in renewables.

2. NLC India Ltd



The company signed an MoU with the Tamil Nadu government to set up a solar and wind power project worth ₹7,000 crore. It achieved a 14% increase in coal production YoY, ensuring steady fuel supply for power generation. Motilal Oswal gave a 'Buy' rating with a target price of ₹280, expecting continued growth in power generation.

3. Tata Motors Ltd

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) reported 16% YoY growth in global sales, boosting Tata Motors' overall revenue. The company launched three new electric vehicle (EV) models, strengthening its presence in the EV mar-



ket. HSBC has raised its target price to ₹1,050, maintaining a 'Buy' rating due to strong demand in domestic and international markets.

4. CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd

CG Power bagged a ₹1,100 crore order from the Indian Railways for traction motors.

The company is expanding its manufacturing facility to support increasing demand for power equipment. ICICI Securities upgraded its rating to 'Buy' with a target price of ₹740/800, citing strong earnings potential.



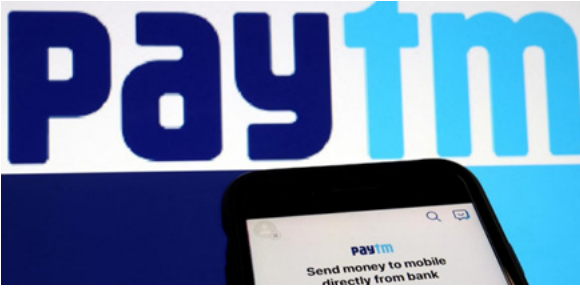
5. Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL)



IHCL announced the addition of 10 new hotels under the Taj and Vivanta brands, expanding its luxury segment. The company's revenue per available room (RevPAR) grew 12% YoY, supported by rising domestic and international tourism. Morgan Stanley has given a 'Buy' rating with a target price of ₹960, expecting further expansion in premium hospitality.

PayTm money receives SEBI nod to start research analysis business

Paytm Money has received a registration certificate from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to operate as a research analyst, according to filings with the exchange. This milestone marks a significant step in Paytm Money's efforts to broaden its investment services and enhance its offerings to users.



insights and comprehensive market analyses.

By adding research and advisory services to its platform, Paytm Money is looking to offer a more holistic approach to investing, empowering its users with the tools and information needed to navigate the financial markets more effectively.

The company highlighted that this new development aligns with its goal to expand its presence in the investment ecosystem. By obtaining this certification, Paytm Money aims to improve the user experience by providing expert-backed research and insights for both retail and institutional investors. With SEBI's approval, Paytm Money is now authorized to offer research reports and

investment analyses to its users, enhancing the value it brings to its platform.

The new research services will soon be integrated into the Paytm Money app, allowing users to access advisory and research-backed recommendations directly through the app. This expansion is set to help investors make more informed decisions by providing access to expert

As part of its long-term strategy, Paytm Money aims to continue developing its platform to cater to a diverse range of investors, from individuals making their first investment to seasoned institutional investors. The SEBI certification is expected to significantly bolster the company's position in India's rapidly growing investment ecosystem.

India's trade deficit in Feb drops to \$14 bn; petroleum exports to Europe shrink by 30%

India's merchandise trade deficit narrowed sharply to a three-year low of \$14.05 billion in February, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Monday. This significant reduction was largely driven by a 30% decline in petroleum exports to Europe and a more than 60% drop in gold imports. The decline in petroleum exports, which had been a major contributor to India's export growth following the Russia-Ukraine war, was particularly notable. The decrease came shortly after the imposition of sweeping US sanctions targeting Russia's oil trade in January 2025, which placed 183 Russian oil tankers under sanctions. The sanctions appear to have had a direct impact on India's petroleum export volumes to Europe, a key market. Additionally, India's petroleum imports also saw a decrease of 26%, contributing further to the reduction in the trade deficit.

Gold imports, another significant factor in India's merchandise trade, fell dramatically by over 60%, further influencing the decline in the trade deficit. Gold has been a major import for India, driven by seasonal demand and cultural factors. However, lower demand for gold, coupled with rising prices, contributed to the steep drop in imports. The reduced trade deficit reflects a contraction in both exports and imports, but it highlights India's improved balance of trade. Despite the challenges posed by external factors such as sanctions and global price fluctuations, India's merchandise trade deficit appears to be stabilizing. With the reduction in both petroleum exports and gold imports, India is likely to focus on diversifying its export base and increasing trade with emerging markets to sustain its economic growth while managing its trade balance.

India imposes provisional anti-dumping duty on import of Chinese aluminium foil

India has imposed a provisional anti-dumping duty on aluminium foil imports from China, ranging from \$619 to \$873 per metric tonne (MT). This move, which will remain in effect for six months, aims to provide relief to domestic aluminium foil manufacturers by addressing the impact of cheaper imports from China.

The Finance Ministry issued a gazette notification on March 17, detailing the provisional duty applicable to aluminium foil imports with a thickness of up to 80 mi-

crons. However, the duty will not apply to aluminium foil below 5.5 microns used for non-capacitor applications. This action follows preliminary findings of material injury to Indian producers, who have faced increasing competition from low-priced Chinese imports. The imposition of this anti-dumping duty aligns with India's ongoing efforts to protect its domestic industries from unfair trade practices. The move is also reflective of broader global trade tensions, particularly in light of recent tariff measures imposed by other coun-

tries. In addition to India's actions, the United States has implemented reciprocal tariffs on a range of Chinese goods, including a 25% tariff on aluminium imports, further highlighting the growing trade friction between major economies. This decision by the Indian government is expected to help curb the influx of cheap Chinese aluminium foil, which has been undercutting local manufacturers and putting pressure on their profitability. Domestic producers have long complained about the import of cheaper aluminium foil from

China, which has resulted in significant market distortions. The provisional anti-dumping duty is a temporary measure while a more comprehensive investigation continues. The Indian government's response underscores its commitment to supporting local industries and ensuring fair trade practices. The six-month duration of the duty will allow Indian producers to adjust to the market changes, with the possibility of further action based on the outcomes of the ongoing investigation.



iPhone 17 Air Was Supposed to Be Port-Free, But Apple Scrapped the Idea: Mark Gurman



The iPhone 17 series has been a topic of extensive speculation, with rumors suggesting the lineup will include the iPhone 17, iPhone 17 Air (or iPhone 17 Slim), iPhone 17 Pro, and iPhone 17 Pro Max, with an expected launch in the second quarter of this year. Among these, the iPhone 17 Air was slated to be Apple's thinnest iPhone yet, potentially replacing the Plus variant in the lineup. Bloomberg's Mark Gurman has revealed new details about the iPhone 17 Air, including an ambitious plan that Apple initially considered. According to Gurman's weekly Power On newsletter, Apple originally planned to make the iPhone 17 Air "Apple's first completely port-free iPhone." The device would have relied on wireless charging and cloud-based data syncing, eliminating the traditional charging ports altogether. This move was intended to pave the way for even slimmer models in the future, with a sleek, minimalist design that further pushed the limits of device thinness. However, Apple reportedly scrapped this plan to avoid po-

tential regulatory issues, particularly from the European Union (EU), which has recently mandated that tech companies like Apple adopt the USB Type-C charging standard. Apple's decision was likely influenced by the need to comply with the EU's regulations and maintain its broad consumer appeal. The iPhone 17 Air's thin design would have required a thinner battery, which could have compromised battery life. To avoid this, Apple instructed engineers to redesign key components, including the display and silicon, to optimize efficiency while maintaining performance. Expected Specifications: The iPhone 17 Air is expected to feature a 9.5mm thick profile, including the 4mm camera bump. It may offer a 6.6-inch OLED display with a 120Hz ProMotion refresh rate and Dynamic Island. The device could house a 24MP front camera, a 48MP rear camera, and be made with a titanium frame. It may also include Apple's first 5G modem and Wi-Fi chip. Rumored pricing is between \$1,299 and \$1,500.

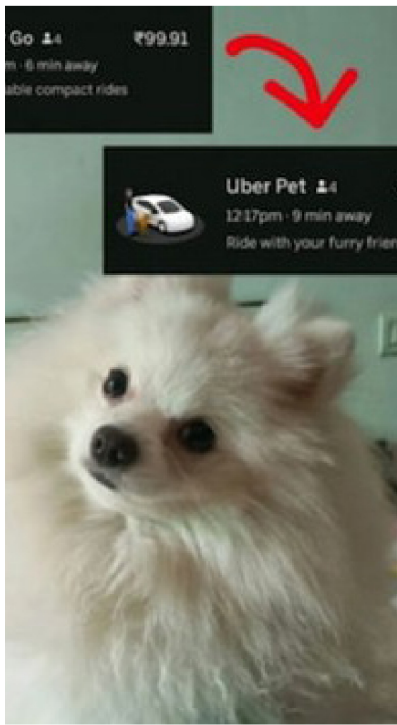
Amazon Echo Users Will No Longer Have Option to Process Alexa Voice Recordings On-Device



Amazon has announced that starting March 28, Echo users will no longer have the option to process their voice commands and recordings locally on their devices. Instead, all Alexa voice recordings will be sent to Amazon's cloud for processing, as the company expands Alexa's capabilities with generative AI features. This change affects all Echo devices such as smart speakers and displays. In an email to users who had previously enabled the 'Do Not Send Voice Recordings' option, Amazon explained that on-device processing is being discontinued to enable the new AI-driven features that require the processing power of Amazon's secure cloud. The company emphasized that Alexa voice requests will remain encrypted during transmission to the cloud, where they are processed under security protections. Although voice recordings will still be deleted automatically after processing, the new policy raises privacy concerns. Many users may be uncomfortable with Amazon having access to their voice data, especially in the context of

in-home devices that can listen continuously. Amazon assures users that privacy controls will still be available through the Alexa Privacy dashboard, where they can manage how their data is handled, including the option to prevent their voice recordings from being stored at all. Amazon also announced the upcoming launch of Alexa+, a subscription-based, generative AI version of Alexa, which will include advanced features like Alexa Voice ID. This feature will allow Alexa to recognize individual users based on their voice, and share personalized content like calendar events and music. However, Amazon clarified that Voice ID may not function if users choose not to save voice recordings. This shift in policy is part of Amazon's ongoing push to enhance Alexa's AI capabilities but raises concerns about privacy, particularly in light of past controversies surrounding the handling of user data. Notably, Amazon has faced scrutiny over allowing employees to listen to Alexa voice recordings for training purposes and other privacy violations related to its Ring doorbell cameras.

Gurugram Woman Calls Out Uber Pets For Overpricing



A Gurugram woman has raised concerns over the steep pricing of Uber's new service, Uber Pets, which allows passengers to travel with their pets. In a LinkedIn post, she highlighted the significant price difference between regular Uber rides and Uber Pets. For a short 2 km ride, the regular Uber fare was ₹100, while Uber Pets cost a staggering ₹530, over five times the price of a regular ride. The woman questioned whether the price hike was justified, speculating that it could account for cleaning fees, premium drivers, or simply be an added charge for pet owners. She pointed out that her local auto-rickshaw charges just ₹60 for a similar ride and even

offers belly rubs for her dog, making the Uber Pets pricing seem excessive. In her post, she expressed her surprise at the service's pricing, asking, "If the goal was accessibility, why is this service a luxury?" She further criticized the fact that many pet owners might struggle with these higher costs, especially when pets are considered family members. While some commenters suggested booking a regular Uber and informing the driver about the pet, others speculated that Uber might be capitalizing on the growing trend of pet ownership in India. One user pointed out that Uber may be trying to monetize this shift in consumer preferences.

Forget 2 Minutes, This Eatery Serves Noodles in Just 48 Seconds!



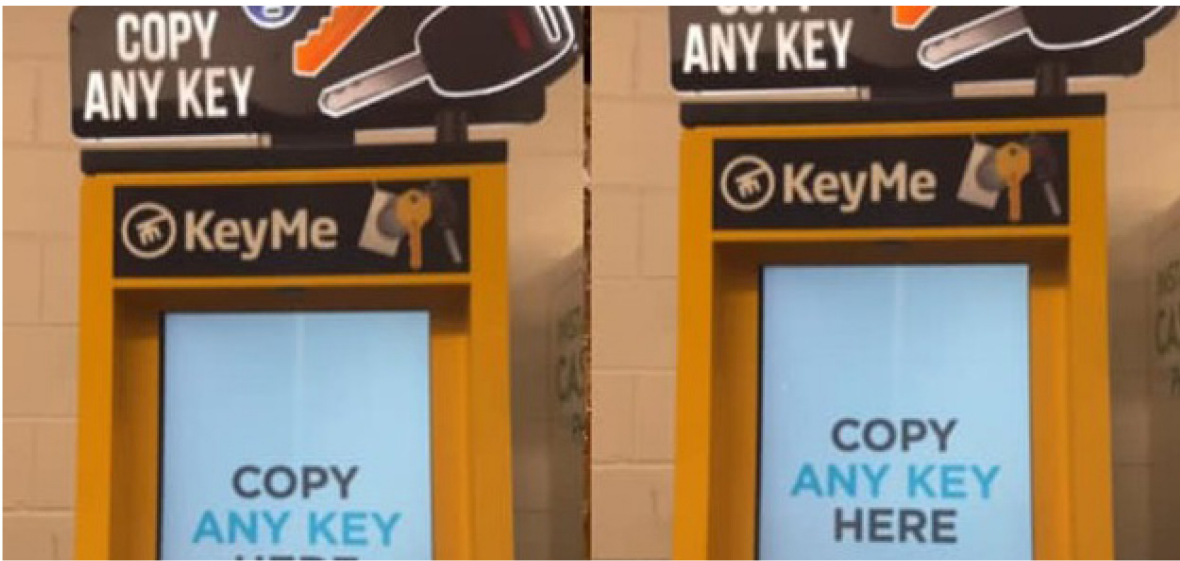
In the bustling city of Shenzhen, China, a new eatery is turning heads with its incredible speed of service, offering freshly cooked noodles in just 48 seconds. The Future Noodle Restaurant, a small but highly efficient establishment, has taken fast food to a whole new level. While most noodle dishes take at least two minutes to prepare, this restaurant uses a robotic system to make noodles from scratch in record time. The process is nothing short of fascinating. A robotic arm mixes flour and water, shaping the dough into perfect noodles in just eight seconds. The noodles are then plunged into hot water, where they cook with various ingredients like marinated eggs and grilled sausages for 40 seconds. The result is a hot, fresh, and delicious bowl of noodles, served in under a minute. The restaurant, which spans only eight square

meters, uses a self-service kiosk for ordering. Customers can choose from ten different noodle varieties, paired with sides such as marinated eggs and grilled sausages. The price of a meal ranges from 6 to 20 yuan (roughly Rs 122 to Rs 250), making it an affordable and quick dining option. A transparent window allows customers to observe the robotic cooking process, which has garnered praise for its speed, efficiency, and, most importantly, the flavor of the final product. With its cutting-edge technology and quick turnaround time, Future Noodle Restaurant is setting a new standard for fast food, proving that great meals don't need to take long to prepare. This innovative concept is a glimpse into the future of dining, where automation and robotics combine to deliver convenience and quality in record time.

US Vending Machine Goes Viral for Duplicating Keys in Minutes

A viral video is captivating social media users, showcasing a unique vending machine in the US that can duplicate keys within minutes. Shared by Tanvir Shaikh on Instagram, the video demonstrates an alternative to the traditional and often time-consuming process of visiting a locksmith. In the video, Tanvir walks up to a vending machine resembling an ATM and taps the screen to begin the key duplication process. The machine offers several options, including standard keys, vehicle keys, access cards, and key fobs. Tanvir selects the standard option for a basic key copy, inserts his original key into a scanning slot, and chooses his preferred key

type—brass in this case. After selecting the number of copies—two in this case—he proceeds to the payment section. Within minutes, the machine dispenses three keys instead of two, surprising Tanvir with a free extra key. This fast, automated process has drawn attention for its convenience and efficiency compared to traditional locksmith services, where customers often face longer waiting times. Tanvir's Instagram reel has sparked interest, highlighting how technology is transforming everyday services like key duplication, making it quicker, easier, and more accessible.





PM Modi Praises Athletes' Success at Special Olympics Winter Games

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed immense pride and joy in the achievements of Indian athletes at the Special Olympics World Winter Games held in Turin, Italy. In a post on social media, the Prime Minister praised the athletes for bringing honour to the nation by securing 33 medals, including 8 gold, 18 silver, and 7 bronze, in various sports like alpine skiing, snowboarding, floorball, snowshoeing, short track speed skating, and cross-country skiing. The Indian contingent, comprising 30 athletes and 19 support staff, returned home with an inspiring collection of medals from the historic 2025 edition of the games. PM Modi met with the athletes in Parliament, congratulating them personally for their remarkable accomplishments. Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya also retweeted PM Modi's message, acknowledging the athletes as "Param-Mitra" (Best Friends). A welcome ceremony was organized at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, attended by Raksha Khadse, Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, and Mallika Nadda, President of Special Olympics Bharat. Athlete Bharti, who won two gold medals, was also present on stage to celebrate the moment. To honor their success, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced increased cash prizes for the athletes. Gold medallists will receive Rs. 20 lakhs, while silver and bronze winners will be awarded Rs. 14 lakhs and Rs. 8 lakhs, respectively.



S8UL to Represent India at Esports World Cup 2025

S8UL has been selected as a Club Partner for the Esports World Cup 2025 (EWC), making history as the first Indian team to earn this honor. Chosen among 40 elite esports organizations globally, S8UL's dominance in games like BGMI, Pokemon UNITE, VALORANT, and Call of Duty: Mobile has earned global recognition. This achievement highlights S8UL's impact on Indian esports and its growing international presence, including expansion into Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Europe. Co-Founder Animesh 'Thug' Agarwal expressed pride in the selection, emphasizing the significance for Indian esports. The Esports World Cup 2025 will feature top-tier games and a massive prize pool, with S8UL aiming to showcase India's gaming talent on the global stage. The tournament will take place in Riyadh later this year.

Harvinder Singh Applauds Khelo India Para Games for Elevating Para Sports



2024 Paralympics gold medallist Harvinder Singh expressed his excitement for the upcoming Khelo India Para Games (KIPG 2025), set to begin on March 20. The 34-year-old archer praised the competition's international standards, which he believes have raised the bar for para athletes in India. Harvinder, who won gold at the inaugural KIPG 2023, highlighted how the event motivates athletes to perform at their best by selecting the top 16 performers at the national level. He also commended the tournament's high-quality organization, comparing it to international events. With over 1200 athletes expected to compete across six disciplines, KIPG 2025 will be held at three venues in New Delhi, including Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and Indira Gandhi Stadium. Harvinder emphasized that the growing support for para sports is fostering a more inclusive society in India.



Andhra Pradesh Super Cup Announced

The Andhra Pradesh Football Association (APFA) has announced the APFA Super Cup - War of the Zones tournament, set to take place from March 20-27, 2025. This exciting football competition will bring together top talent from across the state, with 8 zones participating in 57 matches, all vying for the coveted prize. The tournament will showcase regional teams and crown the best football team in Andhra Pradesh.

- Kolleru (Krishna, NTR, Eluru)**
- Nallamala (Prakasam, Palnadu, Guntur, Bapatla)**
- Coromandel (Tirupati, Chittoor, Nellore)**
- Penna (Kadapa, Annamayya, Sri Sathya Sai)**
- Tungabhadra (Kurnool, Nandyala, Anantapuram)**

The competition comes with a ₹5,00,000 prize pool, further motivating teams to give their best on the field. In preparation for the Super Cup, the Kolleru team held a coaching camp at International Delhi Public School in Tadepalligudem. The camp focused on fitness, strategy, and skills development. The school principal, N Uma Srinivas, graced the closing ceremony, unveiling the team's jersey and congratulating the athletes. This tournament aims to strengthen football culture in Andhra Pradesh.

The eight zones competing in the tournament are:

- Vamsadhara (Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Manyam)**
- Visakha (Visakhapatnam, Anakapalli, ASR)**
- Godavari (East Godavari, West Godavari, Konaseema)**



India Defeats Italy 64-22 in Kabaddi World Cup Opener

India began their Kabaddi World Cup 2025 campaign with a commanding 64-22 victory over Italy in their Group B match. The defending champions dominated the match, securing two points and topping their group. Scotland, in the other Group B clash, defeated Wales 63-43 to take second place in the group. India's next match will be against Scotland on Tuesday. The tournament, hosted across four cities in England's West Midlands, features both men's and women's competitions. India is defending their titles in both categories. In the men's event, India is placed in Group B alongside Italy, Scotland, Wales, and Hong Kong, while the women's team competes in Group D with Wales and Poland. The top teams from each group will advance to the quarterfinals starting on March 21.

Hockey India Promises Bigger HIL After Team Owners Express Concerns

Team owners of the Hockey India League (HIL) have raised concerns about the first edition of the league, particularly regarding the sponsorship earnings and operational costs. Despite the league's positive reception, the owners were dissatisfied with the sponsorship revenue, which fell far short of expectations. Hockey India had anticipated Rs 90 crore in sponsorships but only earned around Rs 13 crore. During a recent meeting in Bhubaneswar, owners highlighted the losses incurred, especially those who owned both men's and women's teams, citing an operational cost of over Rs 20 crore. Hockey India has responded by promising a bigger and better HIL in its next edition, with plans to distribute 60% of the Rs 13 crore sponsorship earnings among the team owners. Additionally, a new commercial head will be hired to fo-

cus on boosting revenue for the next season. The league also plans to address concerns related to broadcast quality, players' purse, and marketing strategies to improve the competition's overall appeal and financial sustainability.



PV Sindhu to Lead Indian Challenge at Swiss Open 2025



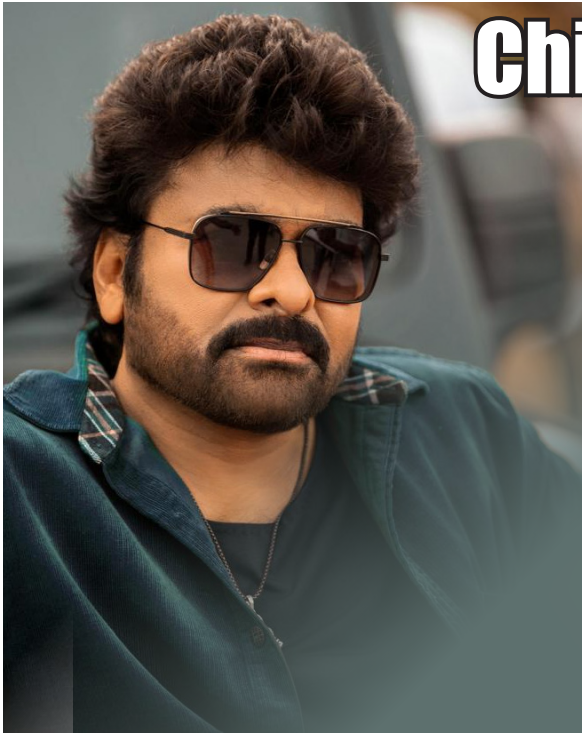
Two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu will lead India's charge at the Swiss Open 2025, a BWF Super 300 tournament, set to begin on Tuesday at St Jakobshalle in Basel, Switzerland. Sindhu, ranked 16th globally and the 2022 Swiss Open champion, will face compatriot and world number 28

Malvika Bansod in an exciting first-round women's singles match. The Indian contingent features a strong lineup in both singles and doubles categories. In men's singles, world number 15 Lakshya Sen will square off against 2016 Swiss Open winner HS Prannoy. Priyanshu Rajawat and Kiran George are also competing in the men's singles. In women's doubles, world number nine Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand will lead India's charge, alongside Priya Konjengbam-Shruti Mishra and Varshini Viswanath Sri-Arathi Sara Sunil. India will also have two mixed doubles pairs—Ashith Surya-Amrutha Pramuthesh and Sathish Karunakaran-Aadya Variyath—in the main draw. The tournament will see top seeds Shi Yu Qi (China) and Pornpawee Chochuwong (Thailand) in the men's and women's singles, respectively.

BCCI to Form Panel for Women's World Cup and Ban Tobacco, Crypto Sponsorships



The BCCI will form an organizing committee for the 2025 Women's ODI World Cup and decide on venues for the event during its Apex Council meeting in Kolkata on March 22, ahead of the IPL opener. The Women's World Cup, last hosted by India in 2013, will take place in October. The committee will also finalize the structure for the 2025-26 domestic season and decide on venues for India's series against West Indies and South Africa. Additionally, the BCCI will address a government directive to ban tobacco and crypto sponsorships, following the health ministry's order for the IPL starting March 22. This meeting will also approve changes in bank account signatories following new office-bearers' appointment.



Chiranjeevi's New Film Set in Village Backdrop

Megastar Chiranjeevi is all set to collaborate with director Anil Ravipudi for an upcoming film, which will commence production in the first week of June. The highlight of this project is its rural setting, marking Chiranjeevi's return to a village backdrop after several years. The film is slated for a Sankranti 2026 release. According to reports, actress Aditi Rao Hydari is being considered for the female lead, though an official announcement is

awaited. The film promises entertainment with a mass appeal, with music composed by Bheems Ceciroleo and Ramana Gogula. Recently, the production team sought divine blessings at Simhadri Appanna Temple before beginning the scriptwork. Chiranjeevi has previously delivered hits like Indra, Alluda Majaka, Apadbandhavudu, and Khaidi in a village backdrop, and fans are eagerly awaiting his return to a similar setting.



Tamannaah Shares Party Pics Amid Breakup Rumors

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, who continues to enjoy immense popularity, recently shared a cryptic message on social media that caught fans' attention. She stated, "Don't wait for miracles in life, create your own," hinting at a self-empowered outlook. Tamannaah also posted pictures from a party with friends, including Manish Malhotra, Rasha Thadani, and Pragma Kapoor. These posts have sparked speculation among netizens that she might be trying to move on from her rumored breakup with actor Vijay Varma after three years of dating. Known for her bold choices, Tamannaah recently stunned audiences with her daring performance in Lust Stories 2. While she remains silent on the breakup rumors, her latest posts have fueled curiosity about her personal life. Fans continue to support her, praising her confidence and self-growth.

"All We Imagine As Light, Shahana Goswami Win Big at Asian Film Awards 2025"

Payal Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light and actress Shahana Goswami won top honors at the 18th Asian Film Awards held at the Xiqu Centre, Hong Kong. The acclaimed India-French co-production won Best Film, triumphing over strong contenders like Black Dog (China), Exhuma (South Korea), Teki Cometh (Japan), and Twilight of the Warriors: Walled In (Hong Kong). Shahana Goswami won Best Actress for her powerful role in Santosh, a film about a widowed housewife inheriting her late husband's job as a police constable and becoming involved in a murder investigation. Meanwhile, Santosh director Sandhya Suri



was honored with Best New Director. Kapadia's All We Imagine As Light made history last year as the first Indian film to win the Grand Prix Award at Cannes. The Asian Film Awards 2025 further cemented its global recognition.

Amitabh Bachchan Praises Abhishek's Performance in Sarkar

Amitabh Bachchan recently reflected on Sarkar (2005) and lauded Abhishek Bachchan's performance, stating that he was "nowhere in the film" as his son owned the screen. In his blog, Big B shared that he revisited the film after years and was amazed by its quality, direction, and Abhishek's restrained yet powerful acting. He emphasized that his admiration came not as a father but as a true evaluator of cinema,



calling Abhishek's performance "simply stunning." Directed by Ram Gopal Varma, Sarkar is a political crime thriller inspired by The Godfather, starring Amitabh, Abhishek, Kay Kay Menon, and Katrina Kaif. Amitabh also praised Abhishek's latest film Be Happy, directed by Remo D'Souza, reaffirming his appreciation for his son's evolving craft.

Mrunal Thakur Stuns in Desi Look, Gears Up for Dacoit

Bollywood actress Mrunal Thakur recently showcased her classic charm with a desi twist in a lavender chikan-kari lehenga, paired with diamond jewelry. The actress shared the elegant look on Instagram, keeping her make-up minimal. Apart from her fashion moments, Mrunal is currently busy filming Dacoit, a pan-India drama where she stars opposite Adivi Sesh. The film, directed

by Shaneil Deo and produced by Supriya Yarlagadda, also features Anurag Kashyap in a pivotal role. Dacoit tells the story of a convict seeking revenge on his ex-girlfriend. Mrunal also has Son of Sardaar 2 lined up alongside Ajay Devgn, continuing the 2012 hit franchise. With an exciting lineup and her impeccable style, Mrunal continues to captivate fans both on and off the screen.

