

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

Transparency, Freeze on Seats

Parties' Key Resolution on Delimitation



DMK-led JAC passes a unanimous 7-point resolution on delimitation.

The resolution demands stakeholder consultation in the process.

JAC calls for an extension of the freeze on Parliamentary constituencies for another 25 years.

Key political leaders from various states attended the meeting in Chennai.

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy and BRS Leader KTR also attended the meeting.

The next JAC meeting on delimitation will be held in Hyderabad.

TPN Correspondent | Chennai
The DMK-led Joint Action Committee (JAC) convened in Chennai for its first meeting on Friday to discuss the Union government's proposed delimitation exercise. The committee, comprising representatives from multiple political parties, expressed concerns over the lack of transparency in the process and the absence of sufficient consultations with key stakeholders. Following deliberations, the JAC passed a unanimous 7-point resolution demanding an inclusive and transparent approach. It emphasized that any changes in the delimitation of Parliamentary constituencies should involve discussions with all state governments, political parties, and relevant stakeholders to ensure fairness and democratic representation. Key Resolutions Passed by the JAC

The 7-point resolution stressed that any delimitation exercise must be carried out transparently, allowing political parties from all states, state governments, and other stakeholders to deliberate and contribute to the process. It also highlighted the legislative intent behind the 42nd, 84th, and 87th Constitutional amendments, which sought to protect states that had effectively implemented population control measures. The JAC demanded that the freeze on Parliamentary constituencies based on the 1971 Census should be extended by another 25 years, considering that national population stabilization has not yet been achieved. It further asserted that states that successfully implemented population control programs should not be penalized by losing parliamentary representation and

urged the Union Government to enact the necessary constitutional amendments to uphold this principle. To counter any attempts by the Union Government to undertake delimitation against these principles, the resolution called for the formation of a Core Committee comprising Members of Parliament from the participating states. This committee will coordinate parliamentary strategies and submit a joint representation to the Prime Minister during the ongoing session. Additionally, the resolution encouraged political parties to push for state legislative assembly resolutions against delimitation changes and communicate their stance to the Union Government. The JAC also resolved to launch a coordinated public awareness campaign to inform citizens about

past delimitation exercises and the potential consequences of the proposed changes. Key Leaders in Attendance The meeting was attended by several prominent leaders, including Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, BRS leader KTR, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, Odisha Congress President Bhakta Charan Das, and Biju Janata Dal leader Sanjay Kumar Das Burma. Former Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik participated virtually, while the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) did not attend the meeting. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin, who convened the meeting, announced that the next JAC meeting on delimitation would be held in Hyderabad.

Karnataka Bandh Sees Mixed Response, Minimal Disruptions

- Pro-Kannada protests held across multiple districts
- Police detained activists, including veteran leader Vatal Nagaraj
- Public transport and essential services operated as usual



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
The statewide Karnataka Bandh, organized by pro-Kannada organizations on Saturday, saw a mixed response across different regions. The bandh was called to protest against the assault on an NVKRTC bus conductor in Belagavi by pro-Marathi activists. While some districts witnessed strong participation, others saw little impact,

with normal life continuing undisturbed. In Bengaluru, protests erupted at Town Hall and Rajajinagar, where demonstrators raised slogans and attempted to take out rallies. However, the police swiftly intervened, detaining over 50 activists, including veteran Kannada leader Vatal

Nagaraj. The detained protestors were transported to Freedom Park to prevent any law-and-order issues. Despite the bandh call, most businesses, shops, and educational institutions functioned as usual in the capital city. Belagavi, the epicenter of

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Delimitation a Political Assault on Southern States: Dy CM DKS

- Deputy CM attends Joint Action Committee meeting on fair delimitation
- Says reducing South's representation is an attack on federalism
- Calls for unity to protect India's federal structure



TPN Correspondent | Chennai
Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar strongly opposed the proposed delimitation exercise, calling it a political assault on southern states. Speaking at the Joint Action Committee meeting for Fair Delimitation in Chennai on Saturday, he joined leaders from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab, Odisha, and West Bengal to demand a fair approach to parliamentary seat allocation. Shivakumar argued that the delimita-

tion process, based solely on population, unfairly punishes the South, which has contributed significantly to India's economic and social progress while effectively managing population growth. He warned that reducing parliamentary representation for these states would weaken their voices in national policymaking and disrupt the federal balance. "This is not just about numbers; it is about our identity, culture, and heritage.

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CM Siddaramaiah Blames Economic Slowdown for Karnataka's Revenue Dip

- State's revenue collection falls short of expectations
- CM criticizes Centre for not allocating Karnataka's due tax share
- Rs 54,000 crore allocated for Bengaluru's infrastructure over three years



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah defended the state's financial performance in the Assembly, attributing a slight revenue shortfall to the economic slowdown at

the national level. Responding to opposition criticism of the state budget, he argued that Karnataka's financial health is closely linked to the country's economic situation.

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Karnataka Govt to Examine Maharashtra's Job Offers to Marathis: Jarkiholi



- Govt to review Maharashtra's decision on jobs for Marathi-medium candidates
- Kannada-Marathi linguistic issue no longer significant
- Karnataka bandh protest should be peaceful, says Minister

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi
Public Works Department and District Incharge Minister Satish Jarkiholi stated that the Karnataka government and District Administration will review Maharashtra's decision to

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ABSENT FOR MEETING, A LETTER AS A COVER DRIVE

TPN Correspondent | Amaravati
Though he neither attended nor was invited to the Joint Action Committee (JAC) meeting on delimitation held in Chennai on Saturday, former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed his opinion on the issue, urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure that no state loses its parliamentary representation. In a letter dated March 21, Jagan highlighted concerns over potential political imbalances due to the proposed delimitation. "The delimita-

tion exercise should be conducted in such a manner that no state would have to endure any reduction in its representation in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha, in terms of its share in total number of seats in the house," he wrote. He pointed out that the share of southern states in the national population has declined over the past four decades due to strict population control measures. "The share has reduced even further over the last 15 years," he noted, urging the Centre to ensure fairness in the process.



Shabana Azmi: 50 Glorious Years in Cinema

Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award at BIFFes

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Veteran actress Shabana Azmi was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 16th Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFes) last week. Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah felicitated her, and she expressed gratitude for being recognized by the state. Azmi, celebrating her golden jubilee in cinema, reminisced about her bond with Bengaluru, admiring its theatre scene and iconic places like ‘Ranga Shankara.’ She also recalled working with legendary playwright Girish Karnad and director M.S. Sathyu in the 1977 Kannada film Kanneshwara Rama. Her debut in Shyam Benegal’s Ankur



(1974) established her as a powerhouse performer, earning her the National Award for Best Actress. Over the decades, she delivered compelling performances in films like Godmother (1999), where she

played the fierce Rambhi, and Morning Raga (2004), where she mastered a classical singer's role. Even today, Azmi continues to surprise audiences. In the upcoming Netflix series Dabba Cartel, she portrays a middle-class woman running a drug operation, a role reminiscent of her transformation in Godmother. Filmmaker Vinay Shukla describes her as having evolved into a Marlon Brando-like figure, adapting and excelling in every challenge. With five National Awards and an unrelenting passion for cinema, Shabana Azmi remains an enduring force in Indian and global cinema.

Karnataka Home to Hundreds of Startups in Med, Pharma Sectors: Minister MB Patil



- **Karnataka emerging as a hub for medical and pharma startups**
- **KWIN City project to boost investments in the healthcare sector**
- **Focus on affordable healthcare and innovation in medical devices**

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Industries and Infrastructure Development Minister MB Patil highlighted Karnataka's growing prominence in the dermatology, cosmetic medical treatment, and pharmaceutical sectors during the inauguration of the Bharat Summit of Laser Medicine and Surgery 2025 in Whitefield, Bengaluru. Patil stated that Karnataka currently manufactures 350 critical medical instruments and is home to hundreds of startups in the medical and pharmaceutical sectors, actively driv-

ing healthcare innovation. He emphasized that the state is at the forefront of producing medical IT solutions, PCR machines, heart stents, insulin pens, and other key medical devices. The minister also pointed to the upcoming KWIN City project as a major initiative that will boost investments in medical device manufacturing and the broader healthcare industry. He noted that Karnataka-based companies are leading technological advancements in medical devices, digital health, and diagnostics. During the four-day international conference, Patil stressed the importance of affordable healthcare and quick treatment in establishing credibility in the industry. The summit, which concludes on March 23, has drawn over 1,200 delegates from around the world for discussions on advancements in laser medicine and surgery.

Woman Arrested in Kollam for Smuggling MDMA from Bengaluru



TPN Correspondent | Kollam

A 34-year-old woman, Anila Raveendran, was arrested for smuggling MDMA worth several lakhs from Bengaluru to Kollam, Kerala, police officials confirmed. Acting on a tip-off, a team from Sakthikulangara police and the Kollam City Anti-Narcotic Special Action Force (DANSAF) attempted to stop her car near the Neendakara bridge. The driver tried to evade the police, leading to a brief chase before the vehicle was intercepted. Upon searching the car, police found 50 grams of MDMA. A subsequent medical examination revealed that the woman had concealed an additional 40 grams of the drug in her private parts, bringing the estimated total to 90 grams. Police sources stated that Anila had been smuggling MDMA to supply it to school and college students in Kollam city. She was reportedly involved in a previous MDMA trafficking case as well. Authorities have seized the car and launched a detailed investigation to trace the source of the contraband.

Tungabhadra Irrigation Committee’s Key Decision, Relief for Farmers, Drinking Water Assured

- **Water release extended for drinking and irrigation needs**
- **3000 cusecs to be released from April 1 to April 10**
- **Priority given to drinking water and standing crops**



TPN Correspondent | Koppal

In a significant decision, the Tungabhadra Irrigation Advisory Committee has announced the release of water to Raichur, Koppal, Bellary, and Vijayanagar districts to support drinking water needs and protect summer crops. The decision was taken at a meeting held at the Vidhana Soudha Conference Hall in Bengaluru.

Irrigation Advisory Committee Chairman and Minister Shivraj Tangadgi stated that 3000 cusecs of water would be released through the Tungabhadra Left Bank Main Canal from April 1 to April 10. This allocation will ensure the supply of drinking water and support standing crops cultivated by farmers. The Tungabhadra reservoir currently holds 18 TMC of water, of which 2 TMC is dead storage, and 1.2 TMC is subject to evaporation. The remaining usable water is distributed between Karnataka (11 TMC) and Andhra Pradesh (4 TMC).

Based on availability, the government has prioritized drinking water supply and the preservation of standing crops. Additionally, 150 cusecs of water will be released from April 11 to May 10 through the Vijayanagar Left Bank Canal and its distribution network, or until water availability permits. Furthermore, 450 cusecs will be released from April 1 to April 10 for the Tungabhadra Right Bank Lower Level Canal. The Raya Basavanna Canal will receive 200 cusecs from April 1 to May 31. To ensure proper water distribution, the Minister directed district authorities to enforce Section 144 and deploy police reinforcements to safeguard drinking water reservoirs. The government reassured farmers and residents that water would be released in a controlled manner without disruptions.

‘Not 40, But 400 Leaders Honey-Trapped’: PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi

- **Jarkiholi claims at least 400 leaders have been honey-trapped**
- **Calls for a serious government response to the issue**
- **Minister Rajanna advised to file a complaint**

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Satish Jarkiholi has made a startling claim, stating that not just 40, but at least 400 leaders in Karnataka have fallen victim to honey-trapping. He added that officials and politicians from Delhi have also been targeted. Speaking to the media, Jarkiholi emphasized that leaders from all parties have been dragged into such incidents. He urged the government to take the matter seriously and find a lasting solution. Minister KN Rajanna, who recently admitted that an attempt to

honeytrap him was made, has been advised to file a formal complaint. Jarkiholi further revealed that there have been instances in the past where honey trap perpetrators have even blackmailed chief ministers and officials to get their work done. He stressed the need for stringent action against such activities. Meanwhile, former minister and Congress MLA RV Deshpande dismissed honey-trapped leaders as “fools” and urged politicians to exercise caution. “Once an individual’s character is assassinated, it is difficult to regain status,” he warned, calling for strict government action against those involved in honey-trapping. The revelations have sparked intense debate, with opposition parties demanding an immediate judicial probe into the matter.

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Delimitation a Political Assault on Southern States: Dy CM DKS

The Centre’s plan will shift power towards states that have failed to control population growth, penalizing those that have governed responsibly,” he stated. Dismissing claims that this was a North vs. South issue, he described it as a fight to uphold India’s federal structure and ensure equal representation for all states. He vowed that southern states would not allow their voices to be diluted or their resources exploited under an

unfair system. “We stand united in this historic fight to protect the federal fabric of our nation. The promise of India lies in diversity and equality, and we will fight to uphold it,” he affirmed. Concluding his speech, Shivakumar called for collective action, stating, “Joining together is the beginning, discussing together is progress, working together is success.”

CM Siddaramaiah Blames Economic Slowdown for Karnataka’s Revenue Dip

The CM revealed that while the state had projected revenue collections of ₹1,89,893 crore for 2024-25, only ₹1,57,111 crore had been collected by the end of February, accounting for 87% of the target. By the end of March, the revenue is expected to reach ₹1,77,000 crore, which remains below initial estimates. He pointed out that this shortfall reflects a broader economic downturn affecting both state and central revenues. Highlighting a similar decline in the Centre’s revenue generation by ₹1.6 lakh crore, Siddaramaiah criticized the Union government for failing to provide Karnataka with its rightful share of tax revenue. He noted that in 2018-19, when the Union budget stood at ₹24.42 lakh crore, Karnataka received ₹46,288 crore as its share. However, despite the Centre’s budget expanding to ₹50.65 lakh crore in

2024-25, the state has not received a proportionate increase in its tax share and Centrally-sponsored allocations. The CM assured that despite revenue challenges, Karnataka has prioritized capital expenditure and key developmental sectors. The government has earmarked ₹83,200 crore for capital expenditure and increased allocations for education, water resources, public works, and minor irrigation projects. Focusing on Bengaluru’s infrastructure, Siddaramaiah announced a ₹54,000 crore allocation over the next three years, with ₹7,000 crore designated for development projects in the current fiscal year. He reaffirmed the government’s commitment to strengthening the state’s economic foundation and addressing regional developmental needs despite financial constraints.

Karnataka Bandh Sees Mixed Response, Minimal Disruptions

the language dispute, saw a weak response to the bandh in the early hours, with commercial activities and transport services largely unaffected. However, protests by Kannada organizations gained momentum later in the day. Activists in Chikkamagaluru attempted to shut down shops, while in Mandya, demonstrators blocked roads and organized rallies, urging stricter action against those responsible for the assault on the bus conductor. Protests were also reported in Mysuru, Tumakuru, and Chamaraajanagar, though they did not significantly impact daily life.

Public transportation remained operational throughout the state. KSRTC and BMTC buses ran without disruption, and essential services functioned as usual. However, private transport, including auto-rickshaws and cabs, saw partial disruptions in certain areas, as some drivers participated in the bandh. The Bengaluru police commissioner had issued a prior warning, stating that strict action would be taken against those attempting to forcefully enforce the bandh. In some areas, including Hassan and Hubballi-Dharwad, the bandh had little to no effect, with mar-

kets and commercial establishments running as usual. Security measures were intensified in sensitive regions, and additional police forces were deployed to prevent any untoward incidents. While the bandh concluded with minor disruptions, pro-Kannada organizations reiterated their demands for the state government to take stronger measures in protecting Kannada identity and language rights. Activists have urged authorities to address the growing concerns of linguistic disputes, particularly in border districts, to prevent further tensions in the future.

Karnataka Govt to Examine Maharashtra’s Job Offers to Marathis: Jarkiholi

offer jobs and allow Marathi-medium candidates to appear for competitive examinations in the neighboring state. Addressing the media on Saturday, he noted the difficulty in providing jobs even for residents within a state, making employment for outsiders a challenge. He assured that authorities would examine how Marathi-medium students from Karnataka were permitted to apply for government jobs and participate in Maharashtra’s recruitment process. Jarkiholi remarked that the Kannada-Marathi linguistic issue has lost its earlier intensity and is no longer relevant. He asserted that the Karnataka-Maharashtra boundary dispute is a closed chapter, with Marathi-speaking communities integrating into the

state’s mainstream. He also dismissed the significance of the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES), stating that even if banned, its activists might resurface under another name. Regarding the Karnataka bandh called in response to an attack on an NWKRTC bus conductor for asking passengers to speak in Kannada, Jarkiholi urged activists to protest peacefully without disrupting schools and colleges. On developmental projects, he announced that funds have been allocated for various works in the district. The Deputy Commissioner’s office complex will be constructed in phases, and an elevated corridor will be built using funds earmarked for roads and bridges under the Public Works Department.

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje Urges Karnataka Governor to Reject Muslim Quota Bill

- Union Minister opposes 4% Muslim reservation in public contracts
- Calls the bill unconstitutional and discriminatory
- Warns of legal challenges and social disharmony

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment Shobha Karandlaje has urged Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot to withhold his consent for the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements (Amendment) Bill, 2025. The bill, passed by the Karnataka government, provides a 4% reservation for Muslims in public contracts.

In a letter to the Governor, Karandlaje termed the bill “unconstitutional, discriminatory, and against the ethos of the In-

dian Constitution.” She argued that reservation based on religion directly violates Articles 14 (right to equality), 15 (prohibition of discrimination), and 16 (equal opportunity in public employment).

Referring to past Supreme Court rulings, the minister emphasized that affirmative action must be based on social and educational backwardness, not religious identity. She warned that the bill could face legal challenges, stating, “The proposed amendment is an open circumvention of constitutional safeguards and is



liable to be struck down by the judiciary.”

Accusing the Karnataka government of engaging in appeasement politics, Karandlaje said such policies weaken the nation’s secular fabric and set a dangerous precedent. “This reservation is not aimed at empowering the underprivileged but is a blatant attempt at appeasement politics for electoral gains,” she wrote.

She further urged the gov-

ernment to focus on uplifting all backward communities based on socio-economic criteria rather than religious identity. Warning of the long-term consequences, she added that such divisive policies could lead to social disharmony and policy corruption.

The bill’s passage has sparked political debate, with opposition leaders questioning its legality and potential impact on governance.



BJP MLC Criticizes Poor Execution of SC/ST Welfare Schemes

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka Legislative Council witnessed chaotic scenes after BJP MLC Sudham Das raised concerns over the ineffective implementation of the Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) schemes meant for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).

Das, a former bureaucrat-turned-legislator, criticized the state government for poor execution of over 140 welfare schemes designed for SCs and STs. He pointed out that by January, only 54% of allocated funds had been spent, questioning how such schemes could be effectively implemented with such low expenditure levels.

He also blamed the existing system, arguing that placing the Social Welfare Department under the Finance Department hampers the smooth execution of these initiatives.

Additionally, he pointed out a lack of accountability, stating

that despite legal provisions mandating action against officials failing to implement the schemes, no bureaucrat had been convicted in the past 11 years.

As tensions escalated, leaders from both benches engaged in a heated argument, leading to disruptions in the session. The House was eventually adjourned due to the disorderly proceedings.

Responding to the allegations in the Assembly, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah defended the government’s commitment to SCP/TSP schemes. He stated that Rs 42,018 crore had been allocated for these programs.

Comparing allocations, he pointed out that while the BJP government allocated Rs 80,415 crore for SCP/TSP over three years (2020-21 to 2022-23), the Congress government had provided Rs 1,15,505 crore since the 2023 budget. His remarks aimed to counter BJP’s accusations of underperformance in welfare spending.

BJP Leaders Slams Karnataka CM, Speaker for Not Backing Minister Rajanna



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Opposition BJP legislators on Friday lashed out at Karnataka Speaker UT Khader and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for failing to support Minister KN Rajanna, who recently revealed an attempt to honey trap him. The BJP accused the ruling Congress of ignoring the issue and instead suspending 18 BJP MLAs who had extended support to Rajanna.

Addressing to Media, BJP state president BY Vijayendra

condemned the Speaker’s decision, calling it undemocratic. He pointed out that Rajanna, a Congress minister, openly admitted to being targeted in a honey trap attempt and claimed that 48 other legislators faced similar threats. “This is a serious matter that damages the reputation of all 224 MLAs. The CM should have immediately ordered a high-level probe to safeguard his senior cabinet colleague,” he said.

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka criticized the Speaker’s ac-

- BJP criticizes Speaker for suspending 18 MLAs
- Demands judicial probe into honey trap allegations
- Opposes 4% Muslim reservation in public contracts

tions, alleging bias. “We demanded a judicial probe, but the Speaker labeled our protest as goondaism. He acted like a Congress agent,” Ashoka said. He further alleged that Congress’ inaction on Rajanna’s case reflected its neglect of Scheduled Tribes (ST) since the minister hails from an ST community. Ashoka also claimed that Siddaramaiah himself had initially encouraged MLAs to raise the matter in the Assembly but later ignored it. He demanded an inquiry by a sit-

ting judge or the CBI.

Vijayendra also took aim at the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which grants a 4% reservation to Muslims in public contracts. He accused the government of using taxpayers’ money for appeasement politics. “Public funds should not be restricted to one religion,” he said.

BJP legislators have submitted a petition to Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, urging him to reject the bill.

Govt Trying to Suppress Our Struggle, Says Sara Govindu

- Pro-Kannada activists allege suppression of protests
- Police crackdown on leaders sparks outrage
- Vatal Nagaraj fighting for Kannada rights for 60 years

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Pro-Kannada activist Sara Govindu accused the Karnataka government of attempting to suppress the ongoing struggle for Kannada language, land, and water rights. Addressing the media on Saturday, she expressed disappointment over the state’s actions against activists supporting the Karnataka Bandh. “Our leader Vatal Nagaraj has been fighting for the rights of Kannada people for 60 years, and I have been part of this movement for 40 years. But never before have we seen such suppression. The government is cracking down on our struggle, and police are arresting our leaders without cause,” Govindu said.

She alleged that the arrests were being carried out under political pressure, stating, “The police are merely follow-



ing government orders, but we ask—what crime have our leaders committed? We are fighting for our language and our land, yet instead of supporting us, the government is trying to silence us.”

The Karnataka Bandh, called by pro-Kannada organizations, has seen widespread participation across the state. Activists have demanded stron-

ger measures to protect Kannada interests, including stricter implementation of language policies and fair water-sharing agreements.

Govindu reaffirmed that the agitation would continue despite government pressure. “We will not back down. The people of Karnataka will stand together in this fight,” she declared.

Karnataka Bandh: Police Detain Veteran Kannada Activist Vatal Nagaraj

- Police detain Vatal Nagaraj at Town Hall
- Activist calls police action ‘goondagiri’
- Protest against Belagavi bus crew assault intensifies

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru witnessed high drama at Town Hall on Saturday as veteran Kannada activist Vatal Nagaraj, along with film producer Sa Ra Govindu and hundreds of protestors, arrived to participate in the Karnataka Bandh. The protest was called to condemn the recent assault on a KSRTC bus crew by pro-Marathi groups in Belagavi and to uphold Kannada pride.

However, over 100 police personnel, including the Bengaluru police’s kabaddi team, were deployed to prevent the demonstration. Officers intercepted the protestors and transported them to Freedom Park.

As Nagaraj stepped out of his car, the crowd’s chants grew louder. Within moments, the police detained the 75-year-old activist and escorted him to



a waiting BMTC bus, triggering a strong reaction from him.

“I have never seen such police brutality during my bandh calls. The police are engaging in ‘goondagiri’ and trying to silence us with notices,” Nagaraj lashed out. He also condemned Belagavi MLAs Laxmi Hebbalkar and Satish Jarakiholi, calling them “Marathi agents.”

Nagaraj criticized the state government’s handling of the

Belagavi incident and accused it of failing to protect Kannadigas. He also expressed disappointment in unions that only offered moral support instead of actively participating in the bandh.

Despite police action, pro-Kannada activists vowed to continue their agitation, emphasizing their commitment to safeguarding Kannada identity and rights.

Karnataka HC Orders Grandmother, Aunts to Return Minor Boy to Parents

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court has ruled in favor of a couple seeking custody of their minor son, ordering his paternal grandmother and aunts to hand him over. The court granted the relatives visitation rights on the first and third weekends of each month at designated times.

A division bench of Justice KS Mudagal and Justice CM Poonacha passed the ruling while allowing an appeal filed by the boy's parents under Section 25 of the Guardians and Wards Act. The parents, who live in the city, argued that their

son, born in 2009, had been living with his paternal grandmother and aunts, who resided in the same building but on different floors. The aunts, who were unmarried and reportedly suffering from depression, had been allowed to keep the boy with them, while the couple's younger son, born in 2010, remained with them.

Over time, the aunts allegedly influenced the child negatively, causing him to behave differently toward his parents. The matter escalated to the family court, which ruled that the boy would stay with his parents from March to May each year and spend

the rest of the year with his aunts. Unhappy with this decision, the parents challenged the ruling in the High Court. The High Court overturned the family court's order, emphasizing that the child had been deprived of a natural upbringing with his parents and missed out on bonding with his younger sibling. The court clarified that while the child's preference was considered, it could not be the sole deciding factor in custody matters. The ruling ensures that the boy will now live with his parents, with the grandmother and aunts maintaining scheduled visitation rights.



Land Hurdles Delay Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project, L&T Faces Challenges

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project (BSRP) is facing significant delays due to land acquisition issues, particularly affecting Corridor-2 (Baiyappanahalli-Chikkabanavara) and Corridor-4 (Heelalige-Rajanukunte). While some construction progress has been made where land is available, the overall pace remains slow due to pending land handovers and utility shifts. Corridor-2 requires 91.5 acres, including 28.56 acres of private land, while Corridor-4 needs 160.56 acres, with 40.29 acres being private land. Larsen & Toubro (L&T), which is handling the project, has expressed concerns over delays, stating that the lack of land availability and unshifted utilities are major obstacles. L&T sources revealed that work has been completed wherever land has been provided, including the construction of bridges near Heelalige



on Corridor-4.

The Karnataka Rail Infrastructure Development Company (K-RIDE), which is executing the project, has been urged to expedite the handover of private land to ensure progress. Insiders also disclosed that at least five senior engineers working on the project for L&T have resigned, citing frustration over stalled progress, which they believe is affecting

both the company's reputation and their careers. Additionally, the first phase of the project has yet to see work commence on Corridor-1 (KSR Bengaluru City to Airport) and Corridor-3 (Kengeri to Whitefield). The delays have raised concerns about the timely execution of the suburban rail network, a crucial infrastructure project aimed at easing Bengaluru's traffic congestion.

Explosive Substance Found in Bengaluru Hotel Worker's Bag, Arrest Made

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A cracker-like explosive substance was discovered in the bag of a hotel worker on Thanisandra Main Road on Friday. The discovery was made when hotel staff checked his bag while searching for his Aadhaar card, as he had recently joined the establishment. The Sampigehalli police later arrested Abdul Rehman (23), a resident of Bellalli near Kogilu Main Road.

According to Joint Commissioner of East Division Ramesh Banoth, the object resembled a tennis ball, wrapped in polythene, and filled with chemical substances with two fuses attached. The explosive item was safely disposed of in a secure location, and samples were sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) for further analysis. Investigations revealed that Rehman had previously worked as a rag-picker and had left his parents



four months ago. He recently joined the hotel as a supplier on Wednesday, claiming to be a resident of Bellalli. When asked for his Aadhaar card, he failed to provide it even after two days. Growing suspicious, hotel staff checked his storage room bag and found the explosive substance.

They immediately alerted the Sampigehalli police around 9:30 AM. When police questioned Rehman, he claimed to

have found the object on the road but could not provide any valid license or authorisation to possess such material.

He has been booked under Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the Explosive Substances Act, 1908, and Sections 6(a) and 9(b) of the Explosives Act, 1884. Rehman has been taken into police custody, and investigations are ongoing to determine the source and intent behind possessing the explosive substance.

APSRTC Driver Injured in Bengaluru Clash, Karnataka RTC Driver Suspended

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A serious altercation between RTC drivers from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka at the Bengaluru bus stand on Thursday night resulted in injuries to an APSRTC driver and the suspension of a Karnataka RTC driver. The incident, which occurred around 10:45 PM, created a tense atmosphere at the bus stand.

The clash began when NRS Reddy, an RTC driver from the Kadiri depot, parked his bus

in a designated spot. However, Hanumanthu Belividi, a Karnataka RTC driver, entered the area from the wrong route. Frustrated that the Kadiri bus was blocking his way, Hanumanthu confronted Reddy, leading to an argument.

The situation escalated as RTC drivers from Kadapa and Proddutur joined in, intensifying the conflict.

During the heated exchange, Hanumanthu attacked Reddy, striking him on the head with a Volvo bus gear lever, causing

severe injuries. By 11:20 PM, fellow drivers and RTC staff rushed Reddy to Srinivasa Hospital for medical treatment.

After receiving first aid, he was moved to the running room for observation. On Friday, Karnataka RTC officials called him for an inquiry, but when he complained of dizziness, he was taken to Malige Hospital for a CT scan. The scan confirmed that no major health issues were found. Following the attack, District Public Transport Officer Gopal Red-

dy informed RTC MD Dwaraka Tirumala Rao and Kadapa RTC Zonal Chairman Poola Nagaraju about the incident.

They ensured full medical care and support for Reddy. Nagaraju personally visited the injured driver to offer reassurance.

After official intervention, Karnataka RTC authorities suspended Hanumanthu Belividi for his actions. Gopal Reddy also confirmed that Karnataka RTC provided necessary assistance regarding the incident.



Bengaluru Hosts First-Ever Cauvery Aarti, Promoting Devotion and Water Conservation

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru witnessed its first-ever Cauvery Aarti at Sankey Tank on Friday, inspired by the famous Ganga Aarti of Varanasi. Organized by the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB), the event aimed to honor the Cauvery River, Karnataka's lifeline, while raising awareness about water conservation. The grand event featured a procession of priests from Varanasi, traditional rituals, a mesmerizing laser show, and live orches-

tral music. More than 10,000 attendees participated, with sacred water from Bhagamanadala, the river's origin, distributed as theertha. The BWSSB Chairman, Ram Prasath Manohar, described the event as historic and announced plans to make the Cauvery Aarti an annual event, blending devotion, environmental awareness, and cultural heritage. He also highlighted the significance of Sankey Tank, which is linked to the Vrishabhavathi River, a tributary of the Cauvery.

A significant aspect of the

event was the launch of the 'World Water Pledge' campaign, encouraging responsible water usage.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar led a water conservation pledge ceremony, where thousands took an oath, marking a record turnout for such an initiative. Addressing the gathering, Shivakumar emphasized the importance of water in daily life, recalling his visit to Talacauvery, where he performed Cauvery Pooja before bringing the sacred water to Sankey Tank.

Stressing the urgent need for water conservation, he highlighted Bengaluru's Cauvery Phase 5 project, which supplies water to 110 villages. He assured that despite challenges, the government is committed to preventing a water crisis in the city. Additionally, Shivakumar announced plans to extend Cauvery Aarti to the KRS reservoir in Mysuru during Dasara, forming a committee to oversee the initiative. He expressed hope that this ritual would become a key part of Karnataka's cultural heritage.

“Karnataka Bandh Sees Mixed Response, Limited Disruptions Across State”

TPN Correspondent | Bangalore

A statewide bandh called by pro-Kannada organizations on Saturday saw a mixed response across Karnataka. The 12-hour shutdown was organized to protest the alleged assault on a state-run bus conductor in Belagavi last month for not knowing Marathi. In several parts of the state, pro-Kannada groups staged protests, conducting bike rallies and processions while urging shopkeepers to support their cause. However, most commercial establishments remained open, indicating limited public participation in the bandh. In Bengaluru's Central Business District (CBD), traffic density was lower than usual, though auto-rickshaws con-

tinued to operate near metro stations. Some auto drivers voluntarily stayed off the roads to prevent any untoward incidents but planned to resume operations after 2 p.m.

In Mysuru, activists staged a sit-in protest at the suburban bus stand, blocking buses temporarily. However, apart from these sporadic demonstrations, normal life was largely unaffected in the city. Tourist footfall at Mysuru Palace was notably low, but businesses and public transport functioned without major disruptions. Meanwhile, in Chikkamagaluru, protesters attempted to enforce shop closures, urging local businesses to comply with the bandh. Other regions, including North Karnataka, also witnessed pro-

tests, though participation varied across districts. Security was tightened across the state to prevent any violence or disturbances. Bengaluru Police Commissioner B. Dayananda confirmed that no significant incidents had been reported. Police forces were deployed in key areas to maintain order, and protesters found organizing rallies or processions were taken to Freedom Park but were not detained. The bandh remained largely peaceful, with authorities ensuring that public movement was not severely affected. By the evening, normalcy gradually returned to the affected areas as businesses resumed operations and vehicular movement increased. The bandh, though called with strong intentions



by pro-Kannada activists, saw limited impact in many regions, with public response be-

ing subdued. While the protests highlighted ongoing linguistic tensions in the state, the overall

peaceful execution ensured that there were no major disruptions to daily life.

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) on Fair Delimitation

TPN Correspondent | Bangalore

An extension of the freeze on the number of parliamentary constituencies for another 25 years. The current delimitation is based on the 1971 Census, and the committee believes that any changes to this system should be approached with transparency and fairness. The demand was put forth during the JAC's first meeting in Chennai, where political leaders and stakeholders gathered to discuss the implications of delimitation. Addressing the media after the meeting, DMK's Parliamentary Party leader Kanimozhi announced that the JAC had passed a resolution urging the Union government to ensure that any delimitation process strengthens democratic representation rather than disrupting it. She emphasized that any changes to constituency boundaries should be made



through a consultative and inclusive process, allowing political parties, state governments, and other stakeholders to participate actively. According to her, such discussions are crucial to maintaining the democratic structure of the country and ensuring that states have a fair say in the process. Delimitation has been a contentious issue in Indian politics, as it directly affects the distribution of

parliamentary seats and political representation. The freeze on delimitation, initially introduced to encourage population control, has been in place for decades. However, with India's demographic shifts, there have been debates on whether the number of seats should be revised to reflect current population trends. Some argue that lifting the freeze would disproportionately benefit more

populous states, potentially reducing the political influence of states with stable or lower population growth.

The JAC's demand reflects concerns among leaders, especially from southern states, that a new delimitation exercise might lead to an imbalance in political representation. They argue that states that have successfully controlled population growth should not be penalized by losing representation in Parliament. Kanimozhi reiterated that any exercise undertaken by the Union government should be fair, transparent, and involve thorough discussions with all stakeholders before making any decisions. The committee's resolution sends a strong message that delimitation should not be rushed and must be carried out with careful consideration of its long-term impact on India's democracy.



AAI Team to Visit Karnataka in April for Feasibility Study of Bengaluru's Second Airport

Karnataka Infrastructure Development Minister M.B. Patil announced on Saturday that a multidisciplinary team from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) will visit the state in April to conduct a feasibility study for Bengaluru's second international greenfield airport. The team is scheduled to visit between April 7 and 9 to inspect three shortlisted locations for the proposed airport. Two sites have been identified on Kanakapura Road, while the third is on the Nelamangala-Kunigal Road. Patil revealed that the Karnataka State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (KSIIDC) has already paid Rs 1.21 crore to the AAI for conducting the feasibility study. He stated that the Karnataka government had written to the AAI on March 5, requesting an inspection of the shortlisted sites. All necessary documents, including revenue maps, 10 years of weather reports, geographic site images, Survey of India maps, and operational details, have already been prepared for the evaluation.

The minister emphasized that the need for a second airport in Bengaluru has become urgent due to the increasing pressure on the existing Kem-

pegowda International Airport. Additionally, the restriction that prevents the construction of another airport within a 150 km radius of the existing one is set to expire by 2033. With this in mind, the state government is expediting the project to ensure the new airport becomes operational by that year. Addressing concerns about alternative locations, Patil dismissed suggestions of constructing the airport near Sira in Tumkur, stating that such a location would make it a district-level airport rather than a city-serving facility. He stressed that for the airport to attract investors and be viable, it must be located closer to Bengaluru.

Meanwhile, Patil also spoke about the protests in Koppal against the proposed Rs 54,000 crore steel plant by the Baldota Group. Environmental concerns have been raised, with Swamiji of Gavimath leading the opposition. To address these concerns, an independent study by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) is being conducted to assess pollution risks. Patil assured that the government is considering both industrial growth and public concerns without any political bias.

Lukewarm Response to Karnataka Bandh in North Karnataka



TPN Correspondent | Bangalore

The Karnataka Bandh called by pro-Kannada organizations on Saturday, March 22, 2025, received a lukewarm response in the districts of Kalyana and Kittur Karnataka. Despite efforts by activists to mobilize support for the bandh, normal life remained largely unaffected in most parts of the region. In Belagavi, which has been the focal point of the ongoing Kannada-Marathi language dispute and the Karnataka-Maharashtra border row, the bandh failed to disrupt daily activities. Shops, businesses, and transportation services operated as usual, with people carrying on with their regular routines. This indicates that the call for shutdown did not resonate strongly with the local popula-

tion.

In Hubballi, one of the major cities in North Karnataka, there was minimal impact on business and transport services. Although some pro-Kannada activists attempted to raise awareness about the cause, the response from the public was indifferent. Many shopkeepers and traders chose to keep their establishments open, and traffic flow remained largely normal throughout the day. Public transport, including buses and auto-rickshaws, functioned without significant disruption, ensuring that commuters faced no major inconveniences. The bandh was organized in response to the alleged assault on a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus conductor in Belagavi last month for not

knowing Marathi. Pro-Kannada groups viewed the incident as an attack on Kannada identity and called for the bandh to demand justice and reaffirm the importance of the Kannada language in the state. However, the lack of strong participation suggests that the issue did not gain widespread traction in the northern districts. Authorities had deployed security personnel in key areas to prevent any untoward incidents.

However, the situation remained peaceful, with no re-

ports of violence or forced shutdowns. The limited impact of the bandh in North Karnataka reflects a growing trend where such protests fail to disrupt daily life significantly, especially in regions with mixed linguistic populations. Overall, while the bandh may have been intended as a strong statement in favor of Kannada identity and linguistic pride, its weak response in North Karnataka suggests that public sentiment did not align with the call for protest.

Kerala Governor Criticizes SFI Banner Against Savarkar at Calicut University

TPN Correspondent | Bangalore

Kerala Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar, who also serves as the Chancellor of State universities, has objected to a banner put up by the Students Federation of India (SFI) on the University of Calicut campus at Tenhipalam in Malappuram district. The Governor, who was at the university on Saturday, March 22, 2025, to attend a Senate meeting, expressed concerns over the politicization of educational institutions. During his visit, Arlekar reportedly took notice of the banner, which

was put up by SFI activists a few months ago during protests against Arif Mohammed Khan, the then Governor of Kerala. The content of the banner was critical of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, a prominent figure in India's independence movement and a key ideological influence on Hindutva politics. The Governor's reaction highlighted his concerns about political activism on university campuses and the impact it may have on the academic environment. The visit was also notable as it marked the first time in the university's history that a Chancel-

lor attended a Senate meeting. While addressing the gathering, Arlekar reiterated that universities should focus on education and research rather than becoming platforms for political disputes. He emphasized that the politicization of the educational system and institutions should not be tolerated.

The controversy surrounding the banner reflects the ongoing ideological tensions in Kerala's academic and political landscape. SFI, the student wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has been actively involved in campus poli-

tics and has frequently clashed with authorities over various issues. This latest incident adds to the broader debate on the role of student organizations in shaping discourse within educational institutions. Arlekar's remarks signal a firm stance against political interference in academic institutions, reinforcing his position on maintaining neutrality in universities. His visit and comments are expected to spark further discussions on the balance between student activism and academic priorities in Kerala's higher education sector.

Govt vs farmers

Escalating Tensions Between Govt and Farmers Threaten Punjab’s Stability



Punjab is witnessing increasing tension following the eviction of protesting farmers from Shambhu and Khanauri, a development that has exacerbated the divide between the state government and the farming community. The government’s justification for its actions centers on the disruption caused to industries and businesses due to the prolonged closure of vital highways. However, farmer leaders see the move as an oppressive effort to curtail their democratic right to protest.

This clash between the two sides signals a worrying escalation in an already tense situation.

It is unfortunate that both parties have failed to find common ground. In a moment of heightened tensions, they should have come together to exert pressure on the central government to meet the farmers’ demands, particularly the provision of a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP) for all crops. Instead, the two

sides are locked in a bitter confrontation, with the farming unions losing public support, which has, in turn, empowered the state government to take a firmer stance. Meanwhile, the central government observes passively from the sidelines. The situation can no longer afford to spiral further. It is imperative for all stakeholders to engage in sincere dialogue with a commitment to resolving the crisis promptly. A flexible and cooperative approach will be essential for all sides to find a mutually beneficial resolution. The central government must learn from its mishandling of the 2020-21 farmer protests at Delhi’s borders, which led to the eventual repeal of three controversial farm laws but failed to address the MSP issue. At the same time, the state government must explain its change in stance after initially positioning itself as a mediator for farmers’ rights. While Punjab’s economy does need a trade boost, agriculture, which remains its backbone, cannot be sidelined. Both sides must work toward reconciliation to prevent the ongoing unrest from dragging the state further into turmoil.

Rising Communal Tensions in India: A Reflection of Political Failure

Communal Violence Isn’t a Law and Order Problem The BJP Knows This But Pretends Otherwise

In early 2014, during a debate in the Rajya Sabha, Union Minister Kapil Sibal emphasized the importance of addressing communal violence as a national issue rather than just a “law and order” problem. He referenced the 2002 Gujarat riots, arguing that state-sponsored violence was not simply a local matter but a broader political and social concern. Fast forward to today, and these concerns have only grown more relevant, with communal tensions escalating across India, especially under BJP rule.

The recent violence in Nagpur, stoked by Hindutva groups like VHP and Bajrang Dal demanding the demolition of Aurangzeb’s tomb, has drawn sharp criticism for Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Instead of quelling the unrest, Fadnavis endorsed the demands, further inflaming communal sentiments. His controversial statement calling for the removal of Aurangzeb’s grave reflects a long-standing BJP strategy of demonizing historical figures for political gain, despite the nuanced historical perspectives offered by scholars.

Fadnavis’ actions mirror the divisive rhetoric increasingly seen from BJP leaders. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and several other BJP politi-

cians have made polarizing statements, fueling tensions rather than promoting unity. These politicians have not only ignored their duties to maintain social harmony but have actively contributed to deepening divisions. The BJP’s tendency to stoke communal fires has led to a rise in anti-Muslim violence, with incidents spiking after India’s victory in the ICC Champions Trophy and on Holi.

Moreover, police forces in BJP-ruled states have often displayed partisan behavior, with many instances of Muslims being targeted and arrested under

dubious circumstances. The rise in hate speech, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh, has made it clear that BJP-ruled states account for the majority of communal incidents.

The events in Nagpur, the growing hate speech, and the biased law enforcement paint a grim picture. The question posed by Sibal in 2014 remains critical today: How long will the powers that be ignore the political context of communal violence and continue to treat it as a mere “law and order” issue?



Cash in Delhi HC judge’s home

An independent judiciary must also be an accountable judiciary’

A recent incident involving a fire at the residence of Delhi High Court’s Justice Yashwant Varma has once again brought the issue of judicial accountability into the spotlight. The fire, while initially thought to be a simple accident, led to the discovery of a large sum of unexplained cash. Given the nature of the discovery at the home of a sitting judge, one would expect an immediate and thorough investigation. However, instead of any substantial inquiry, the Supreme Court Collegium swiftly transferred Justice Varma back to the Allahabad High Court. This move, made without public explanation or transparency, raises

es concerns about how serious the response was to such a significant issue.

This episode prompts a broader, long-standing debate about the balance between judicial independence and accountability in India. While the Indian judiciary is designed to be independent from political influence, the mechanisms that are supposed to ensure judicial accountability are either seldom used or too complex to be effective. These accountability structures are meant to prevent misconduct and ensure the integrity of the judicial process. However, when these mechanisms fail to func-

tion as intended, the result is a system where the powerful are protected by institutional inertia.

The ease with which Justice Varma was transferred rather than held accountable speaks to a larger issue within India’s judicial system. The approach seems to reinforce the old adage, “When confronted with a problem too uncomfortable to confront, simply move it elsewhere,” making the issue less visible rather than addressing it head-on.

This raises an important question: Where should the line between judicial independence

and accountability be drawn? While the judiciary must remain free from political interference, it must also be held to the highest standards of accountability. Until this balance is struck, incidents like this will continue to undermine public trust in the fairness and transparency of India’s judicial system.



The Future of India’s Sports Media Market: Unlocking Potential with Innovation

Cricket fans in India care in for a treat, with the Champions Trophy win and the Indian Premier League (IPL) just around the corner. Across the nation, cafes, kirana stores, barber shops, and restaurants will transform into mini stadiums as fans turn into pundits, while brands and advertisers scramble to engage customers. Behind this excitement are broadcasters and digital streaming platforms, who pay billions for media rights from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to deliver the action to viewers.

The Indian TV market has shown remarkable resilience, even as streaming services grow in popularity. In 2024, an estimated 546 million people watched the IPL on TV, with another 550-600 million tuning in via streaming services. The overlap between TV and digital viewers is about 70%, showing that TV remains a key player in India’s sports media landscape. In contrast to countries like the US, where viewers have migrated to streaming services to save on costs, pay TV remains affordable in India, with many households paying just Rs 200-400 per month.

Despite this exceptional growth, India’s media market fac-

es significant bottlenecks. Regulatory restrictions on pricing have hindered broadcasters from monetizing the full value of exclusive access and high-quality content. For example, TV channel prices remain the same regardless of whether a household is watching the IPL or its highlights, preventing broadcasters from charging more for premium content or exclusive experiences.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is likely to reconsider its regulatory stance on pricing bundling and other controls. Allowing differential pricing would enable broadcasters to introduce pay-per-view options for live events and offer customized feeds for commercial establishments. This would empower both broadcasters and consumers, providing greater flexibility and value.

As the Indian media market continues to evolve, it’s clear that the future of sports broadcasting lies in innovation and flexibility. By removing outdated regulatory barriers, India’s TV and sports ecosystem can unlock its full potential, creating a more dynamic and engaging experience for both fans and broadcasters.



BJP Leader Shoots Wife and Children in Uttar Pradesh, Two Killed

In a shocking incident in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur district, a local BJP leader, Yogesh Rohilla, allegedly shot his wife and three children in the Gangoh police station area. The brutal attack resulted in the death of his son and 11-year-old daughter, while his wife and another child remain in critical condition. The incident has left the local community in shock and raised concerns about domestic violence and unchecked aggression. According to police reports, Rohilla, who holds the position of BJP executive member, was arrested at the scene shortly after the crime. The police also recovered the pistol used in the attack. Senior police officials, including Saharanpur SSP Rohit Sajwan, immediately rushed to the location after receiving reports of the incident. Preliminary investigations suggest that Rohilla acted out of suspicion regarding his wife's character, which allegedly fueled his violent outburst. SSP Sajwan confirmed that the leader had been under significant mental stress in the days leading up to the incident. However, he

had not shared his concerns with neighbors or anyone else in his social circle. The police are now trying to determine whether his suspicions had any basis or if they were the result of paranoia and undue stress. The crime took place in Sangatheda village, leaving residents horrified and fearful. Police officials, along with forensic teams, have launched a thorough investigation to piece together the



sequence of events. Authorities are also questioning the accused to gather more details and understand his motive more clearly. Eyewitness accounts and preliminary findings suggest that after committing the crime, Rohilla himself called the police to report the incident. This led law enforcement officers to the scene, where they found the two children dead and the other victims critically injured. His wife and the surviving child were immediately rushed to Saharanpur District Hospital, where they are currently undergoing treatment. This tragic case has once again brought attention to the rising instances of domestic violence and crimes driven by suspicion and mental distress. The deaths of the two children have sparked widespread outrage, with many demanding stricter laws to prevent such incidents. Authorities have assured a thorough investigation, and the accused will face legal consequences based on the findings. Meanwhile, the community remains in shock, mourning the innocent lives lost in an act of extreme violence.

Jairam Ramesh Questions PM Modi's Absence as SC Judges Visit Manipur



Congress MP Jairam Ramesh welcomed the visit of a Supreme Court delegation to Manipur but questioned when Prime Minister Narendra Modi would visit the conflict-ridden state. Speaking to ANI, Ramesh stated, "We welcome the six Supreme Court judges who have visited Manipur. In the past 22 months, hundreds have died, and around 60,000 people remain displaced in relief camps. Even today, fear and uncertainty persist among communities. While President's Rule was imposed on February 13, the real question is why it took 18 months to act after the Supreme Court declared on August 1, 2023, that the constitutional system in Manipur had collapsed. It is good that Supreme Court judges have visited, but when will the Prime Minister go?" A delegation of six Supreme Court judges, including Justices BR Gavai, Surya Kant, Vikram Nath, MM Sundresh, KV Viswanathan, and N Kotishwar, visited a relief camp in Churachandpur, Manipur, on Saturday to assess the ongoing crisis. Ramesh also criticized Union Home Minister Amit Shah, accusing him of ignoring Manipur during discussions on the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in Parliament. "Yesterday, the Home Minister spoke for four hours in the Rajya Sabha about his ministry's work, yet he barely mentioned Manipur. In February 2022, the NDA won the state elections with a massive majority, but within 15 months, Manipur was in flames. Why hasn't the Prime Minister visited?" Ramesh questioned. The Congress leader further criticized the delay in imposing President's Rule and noted that Amit Shah visited Mizoram but not Manipur. "There is no explanation for why it took so long to impose President's Rule. The Home Minister went to Mizoram but avoided Manipur. Even statements made by the Mizoram Chief Minister after visiting America raise serious concerns," he added. Ramesh urged PM Modi to visit Manipur before or after his upcoming trip to Bangkok for the BIMSTEC Summit from April 2-4. "We hope that on his way to Bangkok or while returning, the Prime Minister takes time to visit Manipur. His visit is crucial for providing a healing touch," he said. Manipur has been in turmoil since May 3, 2024, when violence erupted following protests by the All Tribals Students Union (ATSU) against the demand for Scheduled Tribe status for the Meitei community.

Meerut Murder Victim's Mother Demands Justice, Custody of Granddaughter

The mother of Saurabh Rajput, a Meerut man allegedly murdered by his wife Muskan Rustogi and her lover Sahil Shukla, has made an emotional plea for justice. She has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to intervene and ensure the strictest punishment for those responsible. Expressing her grief and anger, she has also demanded custody of her granddaughter, fearing for the child's safety. Saurabh's mother voiced her deep anguish over the tragic incident and questioned the well-being of her granddaughter, who remains with Muskan. "She is our granddaughter; we have the right to see her. If the mother could harm her own husband, what if she did something to the child too? We haven't seen her since the incident, and we want to keep her with us," she stated. Her concern stems from the brutal nature of the crime, which has left the family shattered and desperate for justice. The case has sent shockwaves across the region, with many calling for swift legal action against the accused. Reports suggest that Muskan and Sahil conspired to kill Saurabh, allegedly due to an extramarital affair. The murder,

which was reportedly premeditated, has raised serious concerns about the safety and well-being of their child. The victim's family insists that given Muskan's alleged involvement in such a heinous act, she should not be entrusted with the responsibility of raising the child. They believe that political intervention is necessary to ensure that the case is not mishandled or delayed. The demand for the granddaughter's custody has added another layer of complexity to the case. Legal experts suggest that family courts will have to evaluate the child's best interests before making a decision. The victim's family has expressed their willingness to provide a safe and loving environment for the child, arguing that she should not be raised by someone accused of such a serious crime. As the case unfolds, public outrage continues to grow, with many demanding strict legal action and justice for Saurabh. The next steps in the investigation will be crucial in determining the fate of the accused and the future of the couple's child. For now, Saurabh's grieving family remains steadfast in their pursuit of justice, hoping that their pleas will be heard by the highest authorities in the country.



CBI Files Closure Report in Sushant Singh Rajput Death Case



- Accusations made by Sushant's father, Krishna Kishore Singh,
- Against his then-girlfriend, actor Rhea Chakraborty.
- Counter-complaints filed by Rhea Chakraborty against Sushant's family.

More than four years after assuming charge of the investigation, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has filed a closure report in the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, sources confirmed on Saturday. Sushant Singh Rajput, a 34-year-old Bollywood actor, was found hanging at his residence in Mumbai's Bandra on June 14, 2020. His sudden demise left his fans in shock and fueled widespread speculation, leading to a high-profile probe involving multiple investigative agencies, including the CBI, Enforcement Directorate (ED), and Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). The case initially gained national attention when Sushant's father lodged an FIR in Bihar, accusing Rhea Chakraborty and her family of financial fraud, abetment to suicide, and mental harassment. In response, Rhea Chakraborty filed a counter-complaint against the actor's family, alleging that they had pressured him into taking certain medications that might have affected his mental health. Given the complexity and high-profile nature of the case, the CBI took over

the investigation in August 2020, following demands from the public and political circles. Over the past four years, the agency conducted a thorough inquiry, analyzing evidence, questioning multiple individuals, and collaborating with forensic experts. Sources stated that despite extensive investigations, the CBI found no evidence suggesting foul play or any external force leading to Sushant's death by suicide. Consequently, Rhea Chakraborty and her family have been given a clean chit, clearing them of all charges. A forensic team from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), which examined Sushant's autopsy and related reports, also ruled out homicide, reaffirming that it was a case of suicide. With the closure report now filed, the four-year-long legal battle comes to an end, putting to rest numerous conspiracy theories surrounding the actor's tragic demise. However, Sushant Singh Rajput's death remains a deeply emotional topic for his fans, who continue to seek answers beyond official reports.

CJI Orders Inquiry Into Justice Yashwant Varma's 'Cash at Home' Case

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna has set up a three-member committee to investigate allegations against Justice Yashwant Varma, a sitting judge of the Delhi High Court. The decision comes after reports emerged that a large sum of cash was allegedly found at his official residence following a fire incident. The inquiry committee consists of Justice Sheel Nagu, Chief Justice of the Punjab & Haryana High Court;

Justice GS Sandhawalia, Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh High Court; and Justice Anu Sivaraman, a judge of the Karnataka High Court. The panel has been tasked with conducting an in-house inquiry into the matter, following the Supreme Court's established procedure for handling allegations against sitting judges. The controversy began when a fire broke out at Justice Varma's official residence. During the subsequent

response efforts, reports surfaced



that a substantial amount of cash—estimated to be around ₹15 crore—was discovered at the premises. However, this figure has not been officially verified. The incident raised serious questions, prompting the Chief Justice to take immediate action and initiate a formal probe. Under the Supreme Court's in-house inquiry mechanism, allegations against judges are handled internally to maintain judicial independence

while ensuring accountability. The three-member panel will conduct a thorough examination of the allegations against Justice Varma, review any relevant evidence, and determine whether further action is warranted. As the inquiry progresses, all eyes will be on the findings of the committee and the steps taken by the Supreme Court to ensure that justice is served without bias or external influence.

UNICEF Urges Taliban to Lift Ban on Girls' Education in Afghanistan

Global leaders have criticized the Taliban's gender-based educational restrictions

TPN Correspondent | Islamabad
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) called on Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to immediately end their longstanding ban on girls' education, which has kept millions of girls from attending school since the Taliban regained power in 2021. UNICEF's plea comes as the

new school year begins in Afghanistan, with girls beyond the sixth grade still banned from attending school. The ban has left an additional 400,000 girls without access to education, bringing the total number of affected girls to 2.2 million. This makes Afghanistan the only country in the world to impose such a ban on female secondary and

higher education. The Taliban justifies the ban by citing their interpretation of Sharia law, but UNICEF has emphasized the long-term consequences for the country's future. "For more than three years, the rights of girls in Afghanistan have been violated," said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. "All girls must be allowed to return to



school now. If these capable, bright young girls continue to be denied an education, the repercussions will last for generations."

The agency warned that if the ban continues until 2030, more than four million girls will have been deprived of their right to education beyond primary school. The consequences, UNICEF added,

would be devastating, particularly for Afghanistan's health-care system. The decline in the number of female doctors and midwives will result in critical shortages of medical professionals, potentially leading to 1,600 additional maternal deaths and over 3,500 infant deaths.

UNICEF's statement highlights the urgency of reversing

the ban, not only to protect the rights of girls but also to ensure the health and future of Afghan women and children. The Taliban's stance on this issue has drawn global condemnation, including from Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai, who called out the gender apartheid in Afghanistan during a recent international conference.

Lebanon Warns Of "New War" After Israel's Retaliation

TPN Correspondent | Lebanon
Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has issued a stark warning about the looming threat of a new conflict, following Israel's vow to retaliate against recent rocket attacks launched from Lebanese territory. The escalation along the southern border has raised fears of a return to violence that could plunge Lebanon into another devastating war.

In a statement, Prime Minister Salam cautioned that renewed military operations on the southern border could drag Lebanon into a new war, exacerbating the country's already precarious situation. He expressed concerns over the risks associated with the attacks, highlighting that they could bring significant hardship to the Lebanese people.

Israel's response to the rocket fire was swift, with Israeli Army Chief Eyal Zamir vowing a severe retaliation. Zamir emphasized Lebanon's responsibility to uphold the ceasefire agreement, underlining that the country must prevent further escalations. The Lebanese prime minister, however, as-



serted that Lebanon would not be drawn into another conflict without taking action to defend its sovereignty, stressing that the nation must have control over matters of war and peace.

The latest flare-up threatens to unravel the fragile ceasefire that had ended a year-long conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. The recent surge in rocket attacks, which marked a dramatic departure from months of calm, has fueled fears of further instability. Former Israeli Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman sharply criticized Prime Minister Netanyahu for failing to restore security, point-

ing to the simultaneous rocket launches from Gaza, Yemen, and Lebanon as evidence of the dangers Israel faces.

In response to the rocket fire, Israel has launched a series of artillery strikes and air raids, escalating tensions in the region. The situation has quickly deteriorated, with the Middle East once again teetering on the edge of broader conflict. The fear now is that Lebanon could be drawn into the violence as both countries exchange threats and military actions, potentially leading to further destabilization in the region.

Trump pulls security clearances for Biden, Harris and Hillary Clinton

TPN Correspondent | Washington
U.S. President Donald Trump took an unprecedented step by revoking the security clearances of several prominent political figures, including former President Joe Biden, former Vice President Kamala Harris, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and others. This move is seen as part of Trump's ongoing efforts to target his political adversaries.

In a memorandum issued late Friday, Trump declared that it was no longer in the national interest for these individuals to have access to classified information. The list also included former Secretary of State Antony Blinken and other high-profile Democrats. Trump, who defeated Clinton in the 2016 election and Harris in the 2024 race, has been at odds with these figures for years, and this latest action is viewed as another sign of the deepening political divide in

Washington.

While the revocation of security clearances may not have immediate consequences, it serves as a potent symbol of the increasingly bitter partisan environment. Trump's decision came just hours after he arrived at his golf property in Bedminster, New Jersey, for the weekend. This move follows a pattern of actions that many see as attempts to undermine his political rivals and settle scores.

Among the other individuals whose clearances were revoked were Republican former Representative Liz Cheney, a vocal critic of Trump, and several figures tied to the Biden administration, including Jake Sullivan, Biden's former national security adviser, and Fiona Hill, a former Russia expert who served on Trump's National Security Council during his first term. Mark Zaid, a national security lawyer known for representing whistleblowers,



and former Republican lawmaker Adam Kinzinger, also had their clearances revoked.

Notably, Trump had previously had his own security clearance revoked by President Biden in 2021, as is customary for former presidents, in order to ensure access to intelligence and advice on national security matters.

This latest development highlights the ongoing political conflict between Trump and his opponents, as both parties continue to navigate the polarized landscape in Washington.

Japan, China, and South Korea Seek Common Ground in Trilateral Meeting Amid Rising Tensions

TPN Correspondent | Tokyo
Foreign Ministers from Japan, China, and South Korea gathered on Saturday, March 22, 2025, to discuss shared concerns including low birth rates, natural disasters, and cultural exchanges, at a time when tensions are rising in the region. The meeting also set the stage for a trilateral summit later this year, where further cooperation will be explored.

This trilateral meeting marks a significant achievement for Japan, which has long-standing historical and territorial disputes with both China and South Korea. Last year, a similar meeting was held in South Korea. During Saturday's discussions, Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya emphasized the importance of collaboration among the three nations in addressing common challenges amidst global tensions and divisions.

He stated that their collective efforts would serve as a model for global cooperation.

In addition to focusing on regional issues, the foreign ministers discussed concerns regarding North Korea's missile and nuclear programs, Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, and



other critical global matters. On Friday, the ministers had met with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, who reiterated that cooperation between the three nations would not only serve their national interests but also contribute to regional and global peace.

Later on Saturday, Japan and China held their first high-level economic dialogue since April 2019. Foreign Ministers Iwaya and Wang Yi also engaged in separate bilateral talks with South Korea's Foreign Minister Cho Tae-yul.

The meeting comes amid rising concerns over China's

growing influence in the region, and U.S. allies Japan and South Korea have been rapidly improving their ties in response. In December, Tokyo and Beijing agreed to enhance their relationship despite ongoing disputes, including territorial claims over a group of uninhabited islands and China's broader territorial conflicts in the South China Sea.

As regional dynamics continue to shift, this trilateral cooperation between Japan, China, and South Korea could be pivotal in addressing mutual concerns and maintaining stability in the Asia-Pacific region.

Pakistan: Baloch rights leader Mahrang Baloch arrested while protesting in Quetta

TPN Correspondent | Bangladesh
On early Saturday morning, Mahrang Baloch, a prominent Baloch human rights leader, was arrested by Pakistan's Quetta Police while participating in a sit-in protest against the ongoing atrocities committed against the Baloch community. The arrest took place during a demonstration organized by the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC) in Quetta.

The BYC, an advocacy group focused on Baloch rights, shared details of Baloch's arrest on social media platform X, revealing that, along with Mahrang Baloch, several of her associates were taken into custody. In a disturbing turn, the bodies of slain youth, which had been part of the protest, were also seized by authorities. "Quetta Police and Administration have arrested BYC central leader Dr. Mahrang Baloch along with her other associates

and have also taken the bodies of the martyred youth into their custody," the BYC stated.

The protest, which took place in the Sariat area of Quetta, was held in response to the abduction-like arrests of several Baloch leaders, including Begibar Baloch, Dr. Hamal Dr. Ilyas, and Saeed Baloch. These individuals were allegedly detained without proper legal process. The demonstration, initially peaceful, escalated as authorities cracked down on women and children involved in the sit-in. The Baloch Yakjehti Committee condemned the actions of the Quetta Police and local administration, emphasizing the peaceful nature of the protest. They further highlighted the disproportionate targeting of the Baloch community, par-

ticularly women and children, amid a growing number of arrests of political activists and human rights defenders in the region.

This arrest marks a continued crackdown on Baloch activists and raises serious concerns about the ongoing human rights violations faced by the Baloch people. The situation has garnered international attention, with calls for the protection of Baloch human rights and an end to the state's oppressive actions.



RBI Board Reviews Economic Landscape and Approves Budget for FY26

The central board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) held its 614th meeting on Friday, March 21, 2025, to review the evolving global and domestic economic conditions. The meeting, chaired by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, assessed the impact of geopolitical tensions, financial market developments, and other global challenges on India's economy.

During the meeting, the board discussed the current economic environment, considering both global and domestic factors, and their potential effects on India's financial stability. The board also took stock of the RBI's activities during the ongoing 2024-25 financial year and approved the budget for the fiscal year 2025-26.

In its statement, the RBI highlighted the importance of closely monitoring these developments and how they could influence the country's financial and monetary policy. The board's focus was on ensuring that the RBI remains responsive to global uncertainties while safeguarding India's economic interests.

RBI's Deputy Governors, M Rajes-



hwar Rao, T Rabi Sankar, and Swaminathan J, alongside other members of the board, including Satish K Marathe, Revathy Iyer, Sachin Chaturvedi, and Ravindra H Dholakia, were present at the meeting. The discussions covered the current financial year's challenges and the central bank's ongoing policy actions.

Notably, the RBI had previously reduced the policy rate by 25 basis points to 6.25% in its last bi-monthly policy meeting,

marking the first rate cut in five years. This decision was seen as a response to prevailing economic conditions, with the RBI taking a cautious approach to stimulate growth while managing inflationary pressures.

The approval of the 2025-26 budget comes at a crucial time, as the central bank continues to focus on addressing the dynamic and unpredictable nature of both domestic and global economic landscapes.

India's Forex Reserves Rise to \$654.27 Billion in March 2025

India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves reached \$654.27 billion for the week ending March 14, 2025, marking an increase of \$305 million, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday. This increase follows a substantial surge in the previous week, when the reserves had risen by \$15.26 billion to reach \$653.97 billion for the week ending March 7, 2025.

The RBI's Weekly Statistical Supplement detailed various components of the country's forex reserves. Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs), which are a major component of the reserves, decreased by \$96 million to \$557.19 billion. FCAs represent assets held in foreign currencies, including the euro, pound, and yen, and their value is affected by the appreciation or depreciation of these currencies against the US dollar.

Gold reserves, on the other hand, saw a significant increase of \$66 million, rising to \$74.391 billion. This reflects the continued strength in the global gold market. The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), another key component of the reserves, increased by \$51 million to \$18.26 billion. Furthermore, India's reserve position with the International



Monetary Fund (IMF) rose by \$283 million, reaching \$4.4 billion.

India's forex reserves are closely monitored as an important indicator of the country's economic health, especially in terms of foreign trade and currency stability. The rise in reserves indicates a positive trend in India's ability to manage external economic shocks and maintain financial stability.

The RBI releases weekly data on India's forex reserves every Friday, offering insight into the nation's financial standing and its capacity to withstand external pressures, especially in a rapidly changing global economy.

Gold Prices Hold Steady Amid Global Economic Uncertainty; Silver Weakens in India

Gold prices in India maintained their steady trend on Saturday, March 22, 2025, following new record highs, amidst ongoing global economic uncertainty driven by tariff wars. In Mumbai, the price of 22-carat gold for 10 grams stood at Rs 82,690, while 24-carat gold was priced at Rs 90,210 for the same weight. Despite the global economic volatility, gold's price continues to reflect its status as a safe-haven asset.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures were trading at Rs 87,785 per 10 grams, indicating that the yellow metal remains a strong investment option, especially during times of market instability. The demand for 24-carat gold, known for its unmatched purity, continues to rise as buyers seek premium-quality metal. Meanwhile, 22-carat gold, which is prized for its durability and affordability, also remains popular, particularly among jewelry buyers and investors looking for a balance of elegance and practicality.

On the other hand, silver showed signs of weakness in the morning. Silver futures were trading at Rs 97,860 per kilogram on the MCX, signaling a less favorable market condition for the precious metal, which is often viewed as an alternative to gold. De-



spite this, silver has long been regarded as an affordable precious metal for both investors and collectors, and its price fluctuations are closely monitored by market participants.

The price of gold has been climbing steadily, as global economic uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, and the fluctuating value of currencies fuel demand for the yellow met-

al. Gold remains a go-to investment option in uncertain times, with its allure growing stronger among those looking to hedge against inflation and market instability.

As global events continue to unfold, investors and buyers in India will be keeping a close eye on the prices of both gold and silver, as they continue to navigate the unpredictable economic landscape.

Mahindra to Increase Vehicle Prices by 3% from April 1, 2025

In response to rising input costs and higher commodity prices, Mahindra & Mahindra, a leading Mumbai-based automotive manufacturer, has announced a price hike of up to 3% on its SUVs and commercial vehicles, effective from April 1, 2025. The company stated that the exact increase would vary depending on the specific model, including both SUVs and commercial vehicles. This decision follows similar moves by other major automakers, such as Maruti Suzuki India, Hyundai Motor, Tata Motors, Kia India, BMW, and Honda Cars India, which have also declared price hikes for their vehicles starting next month. The automotive industry is grappling with increased costs for raw materials, labor, and logistics, which have contributed to the need for these price adjustments.



Mahindra's decision to raise prices is aimed at maintaining profitability while managing the growing costs of production. While the company did not specify the exact amount by which each vehicle would increase, it assured customers that the price

adjustments would be in line with industry standards. The move is expected to impact the pricing of both Mahindra's popular SUVs and its range of commercial vehicles, though the company did not provide detailed breakdowns of the price

hikes for each model. Despite the increase, Mahindra remains focused on continuing its commitment to providing high-quality vehicles to its customers.

On the stock market front, Mahindra & Mahindra's shares closed at Rs 2,799.30 on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) on Friday, marking a decline of 1.08% for the day. This decline comes amid concerns from investors about the impact of rising costs on profit margins across the automotive sector. The price hike by Mahindra & Mahindra is just one of the many responses to an industry-wide challenge, with automakers adjusting their strategies to cope with escalating input costs. As the sector navigates these financial pressures, consumers can expect to see similar adjustments from other companies in the coming months.

India Achieves Landmark Milestone of 1 Billion Tonnes in Coal Production

In a significant step towards energy security and self-reliance, India has crossed the historic milestone of 1 billion tonnes of coal production in the current fiscal year, the government announced on Friday. This achievement marks a major milestone for the nation's energy sector and underscores its commitment to ensuring a sustainable energy supply for economic growth.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the achievement, calling it a "proud moment" for the country. He emphasized that surpassing the 1 billion tonne mark is not only a testament to India's focus on energy security but also a reflection of the country's growing economic strength. "This achievement highlights India's commitment to energy security, economic growth, and self-reliance," the Prime Minister said, expressing his pride in the progress.

Coal remains the cornerstone of India's energy infrastructure, used predominantly for electricity generation and fueling numerous industries across the nation. As the world's fifth-largest economy, India continues to rely heavily on coal to meet its vast energy demands.

The milestone was reached on March 20, 2025, 11 days ahead of the previous year's total of 997.83 million tonnes of coal production. This early achievement reflects the sector's accelerated growth, highlighting the government's focus on enhancing coal production and meeting domestic demand. The Coal Ministry confirmed the record-breaking production figures, marking a significant accomplishment for the industry.

Taking to social media, PM Modi celebrated the feat, calling it a "proud moment for India" and praising the dedication and hard work of all those involved in the coal sector. The milestone not only demonstrates India's capacity to meet its energy needs but also reinforces the importance of coal in powering the country's industrial and economic activities.





Assassin's Creed Shadows Crosses 1 million Players on Launch Day

Ubisoft's highly anticipated open-world action-RPG Assassin's Creed Shadows has surpassed one million players across all platforms on launch day, the company confirmed on Friday. The game, which debuted on PC, PS5, and Xbox Series S/X on March 20, has received strong initial traction, though Ubisoft has not yet disclosed official sales figures. The milestone was announced in a post on X (formerly Twitter), where Ubisoft expressed gratitude to the players. "It's not even 4PM here in Canada, and Assassin's Creed Shadows has already passed 1 million players! Thank YOU from the bottom of our hearts for joining this adventure in Feudal Japan. We are beyond excited to start this journey with you," the post read.

A Crucial Launch for Ubisoft The game's launch comes at a critical time for Ubisoft, which has faced financial challenges over the past year. After two major releases—Avatar: Frontiers of Pandora and Star Wars Outlaws—failed to meet sales expectations, Assassin's Creed Shadows was delayed from its original November 2024 release to March 2025 to allow for further refinement. The success of this latest entry is seen as essential for the company, especially after its stock price dropped over 40% last year. Assassin's Creed Shadows is also available via Ubisoft+, further boosting its reach. While launch-day player numbers are impressive, its long-term success will depend on sustained sales and engagement.

Steam Performance The game is currently topping Steam's Top Sellers chart, indicating strong revenue performance. On SteamDB, Assassin's Creed Shadows recorded a peak of 46,531 concurrent players within 24 hours of launch. While this number reflects promising engagement, it falls significantly short of Capcom's Monster Hunter Wilds, which hit one million concurrent players on its launch day. Ubisoft is expected to provide a clearer picture of the game's financial performance in the coming weeks. Given the franchise's history of strong sales and fan loyalty, Assassin's Creed Shadows could be a much-needed win for the company.

Journalist, Cab Driver Clash Over 95 Paise; Internet Backs Driver

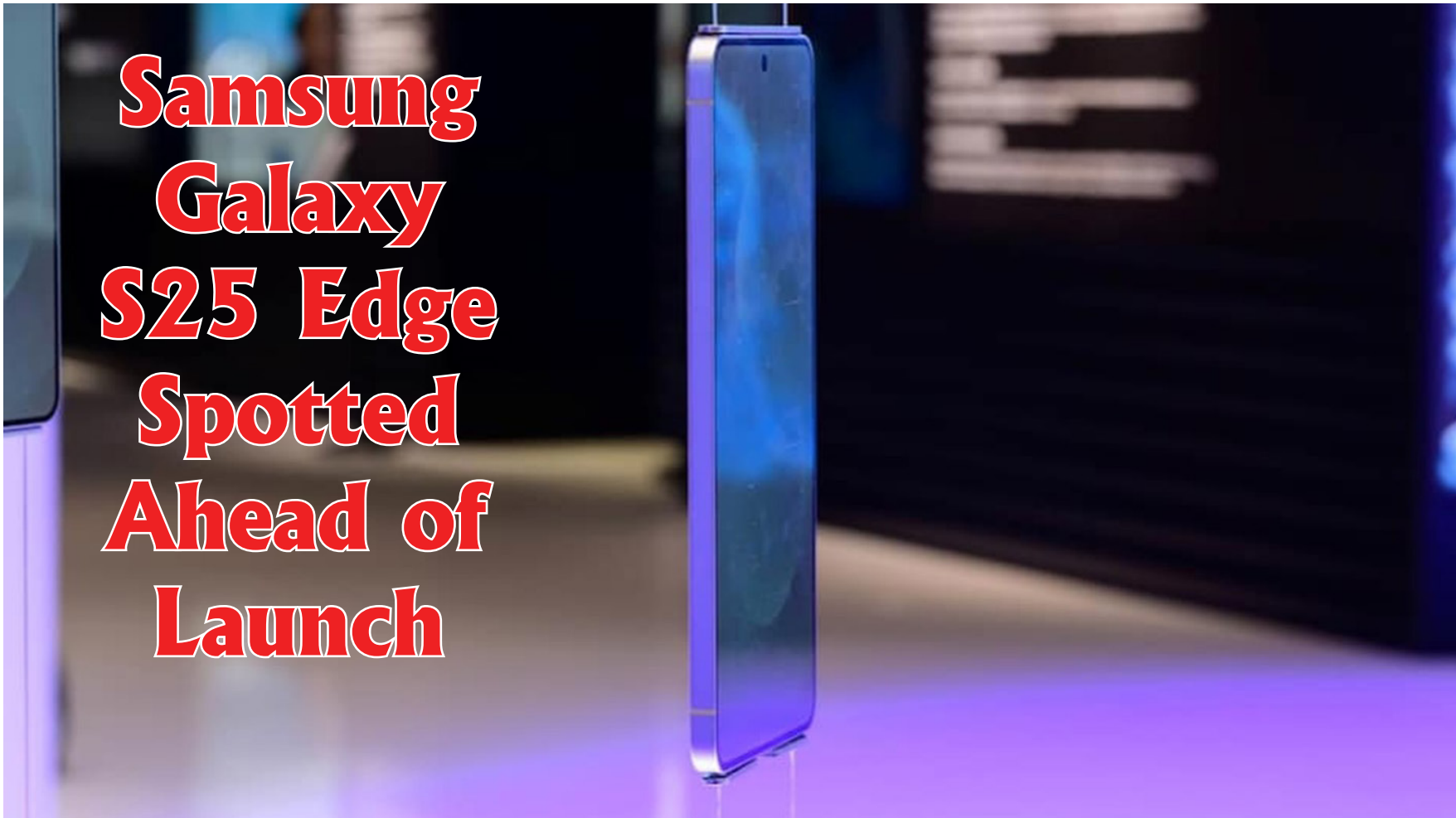


A heated altercation between a woman journalist and a cab driver over a mere 95 paise has taken the internet by storm, with social media users overwhelmingly siding with the driver. The argument, which was recorded and shared online, has sparked a debate over entitlement, fair pay, and gender dynamics. The incident, which took place on the outskirts of Noida, was brought to light by activist Deepika Narayan Bhardwaj, who shared a video recorded by the driver. In response, journalist Shivangi Shukla posted a lengthy thread with her version of events, along with several



videos. In the viral video, the driver is heard asking Ms. Shukla, "Will you not pay the bill because you're a journalist?" To which she responds in English, "You're talking rudely." The driver, however, remains calm and addresses her as 'didi'. Ms. Shukla later alleged that the dispute began when the driver refused to drop her at the exact location mentioned in the Uber app. When she proceeded to pay ₹129 via UPI, the driver insisted on the full fare of ₹129.95, which led to an argument. "He got very aggressive about the 95 paise... He started screaming, and only when I

started recording did he calm down. Suddenly, he started driving, and I thought he was trying to kidnap me," she claimed in her Twitter thread. Internet calls out 'entitlement' In his recorded video, the driver stated that he had simply asked for the full fare and was met with hostility. "I apologized twice. Be happy that you cheated me out of ₹130," he is heard saying. Social media users, after reviewing both perspectives, sided with the driver, accusing the journalist of exaggerating the situation. "If he insists on 95 paise, why not pay it online? Your ego was hurt, so you started recording," commented a user. Another wrote, "The driver was only asking for his full payment, yet she played the woman card." Criticism mounted against Ms. Shukla, with users accusing her of trying to manipulate the situation. "Shocked by this journalist's audacity—justifying a non-issue and painting a false picture," tweeted another user.



Samsung Galaxy S25 Edge Spotted Ahead of Launch

Samsung is gearing up to expand its flagship lineup with the Galaxy S25 Edge and the Galaxy Tab S10 FE, both of which have now surfaced on Geekbench, hinting at their imminent launch. The smartphone is expected to join the Galaxy S25 series, while the tablet will likely be the next addition to Samsung's Fan Edition (FE) lineup. The Samsung Galaxy S25 Edge, carrying the model number SM-S937N, was spotted on Geekbench with performance scores that closely match the standard Galaxy S25 model. The device, powered by the Snapdragon 8 Elite for Galaxy chipset, achieved 2,969 points in the single-core test and 9,486 points in the multi-core test. The benchmarking details also confirm 12GB of RAM, ensuring high-end performance.

Meanwhile, the Galaxy Tab S10 FE appeared on Geekbench under the model number SM-X526B. The tablet, powered by Samsung's Exynos 1580 chipset, recorded a Geekbench 5 score of 1,015 (single-core) and 3,540 (multi-core). While these scores may not seem groundbreaking, the processor is the same one found in the recently launched Galaxy A56, suggesting solid mid-range performance. Both the Galaxy S25 Edge and Galaxy Tab S10 FE are expected to launch in select markets, including India, in the coming weeks. Samsung is yet to make an official announcement, but recent reports suggest that the Galaxy S25 Edge could debut as early as next month. More details on pricing and specifications are anticipated soon.

Antarctic Ice Melt Weakens Key Ocean Current

Scientists have warned that rapid Antarctic ice melt is weakening the powerful Antarctic Circumpolar Current (ACC), which plays a crucial role in global ocean circulation. A recent study projects that the ACC could slow down by 20% by 2050, leading to significant impacts on sea levels, temperatures, and marine ecosystems worldwide. According to research published in Environmental Research Letters, a team led by Bishakhdatta Gayen from the University of Melbourne used advanced climate simulations to analyze how the influx of

cold meltwater from Antarctica is altering ocean dynamics. The study found that this fresh meltwater disrupts ocean density and weakens convection between surface and deep waters, slowing the ACC. The consequences of this slowdown are alarming. A weaker ACC could allow warm ocean waters to reach deeper into Antarctic waters, accelerating ice melt and contributing to rising global sea levels. Scientists also warn that the current's weakening may enable invasive marine species to reach Antarctica, threatening its

fragile ecosystem. Speaking to Live Science, Gayen compared the process to a "merry-go-round," explaining that as the current slows, marine organisms could migrate toward Antarctica at an increased rate. Scientists emphasize the need for long-term monitoring to fully understand the ACC's changing behavior and its global implications. With ocean circulation patterns already shifting due to climate change, the weakening of Earth's strongest current adds to concerns about long-term disruptions in global climate systems.



RCB Triumphs Over KKR in IPL 2025 Opener

Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) secured a commanding seven-wicket victory over defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the opening match of IPL 2025 at Eden Gardens on Saturday. After winning the toss, KKR elected to bat and posted a total of 174/8 in their allotted 20 overs. Captain Ajinkya Rahane led the charge with a brisk 56 off 31 balls, while Sunil Narine contributed a quickfire 44. However, RCB's bowlers, notably Krunal Pandya (3/29) and Josh Hazlewood (2/22), applied pressure in the latter stages to restrict the hosts. In response, RCB's openers set a blistering pace. Phil Salt reached his half-century in just 25 balls, eventually scoring 56 off 31 deliveries. Virat Kohli anchored the innings with an unbeaten 73, achieving his 56th IPL fifty and surpassing the 1,000-run mark against KKR. Captain Rajat Patidar added a quick 34, and Liam Livingstone sealed the win with a six and a four, as RCB chased down the target in just 16.2 overs.



Thomas Tuchel Era Begins With England Win

Thomas Tuchel's England reign began with a 2-0 victory over Albania in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers on Friday, while Robert Lewandowski's late strike secured Poland a narrow win against Lithuania. Goals from debutant Mylles Lewis-Skelly and captain Harry Kane ensured a winning start for England at Wembley. However, Tuchel, who took over from Gareth Southgate in January, admitted the performance left room for improvement. Arsenal teenager Lewis-Skelly, at just 18 years and 176 days old, became England's youngest debut goalscorer, sliding the ball through goalkeeper Thomas Strakosha's

legs after a brilliant Jude Bellingham assist in the 20th minute. Despite the win, Tuchel remained critical of the team's display. "We can do better, we have to do better. The second half was too slow, with not enough runs off the ball," said the 51-year-old German. Harry Kane sealed the victory with a stunning control-and-finish from a Declan Rice cross in the 77th minute. Lewandowski's 81st-minute strike secured Poland a 1-0 win over Lithuania in Group G. Finland edged Malta 1-0, with Oliver Antman scoring before Malta went down to 10 men.

"Selfie or Autograph?" Rohit Sharma's Question Stumps MS Dhoni, Kapil Dev



A viral video featuring three of India's most legendary cricket captains—Kapil Dev, MS Dhoni, and Rohit Sharma—has taken social media

by storm ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025. The clip, from a TV advertisement, shows Dhoni and Kapil sitting on a panel to scout

talent but facing disappointment—until Rohit walks in and impresses them both. In a behind-the-scenes moment, Rohit cheekily asks the two cricketing greats, "You need a selfie or an autograph?" before quickly apologizing for his light-hearted banter. The video has since gone viral, entertaining fans across platforms. CSK vs MI: The IPL's 'El Clasico' With both Dhoni and Rohit gearing up for their 18th IPL season, the two stalwarts will go head-to-head on Sunday as Chennai Super Kings (CSK) take on Mumbai Indians (MI) at Chepauk in what promises to be a blockbuster clash.

Former India cricketer Harbhajan Singh compared CSK vs MI to an "India vs Pakistan" rivalry in IPL, emphasizing the intense fan loyalty and the pressure that comes with this high-voltage fixture. Dhoni, retained by CSK for ₹4 crore, will play another IPL season, chasing his sixth title under new skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad. With retirement rumors constantly looming, whether this will be his last season remains uncertain. Rohit, meanwhile, is set for a new challenge at MI, playing under Hardik Pandya's captaincy while chasing a record-extending seventh IPL trophy.

Medvedev Stunned in Miami Open Exit Djokovic and Swiatek Advance

Defending champion Daniil Medvedev suffered a shocking second-round exit at the Miami Open, falling 6-2, 6-3 to Spain's Jaume Munar on Friday. Medvedev, frustrated throughout the match, struggled with 32 unforced errors and failed to convert two break points in the final game. While the Russian acknowledged a back issue, he credited Munar for the victory. Meanwhile, world number one Novak Djokovic bounced back from his early Indian Wells exit with a dominant 6-0, 7-6 (7/1) win over Rinky Hijikata. The victory marked Djokovic's 410th career Masters 1000 match win, tying Rafael Na-

Karen Khachanov ended Nick Kyrgios' short-lived comeback with a 7-6 (7/3), 6-0 win. Kyrgios, returning from wrist surgery, had secured his first tour-level win since October 2022 in the previous round but was no match for the 2023 Miami semi-finalist. In the women's draw, world number two Iga Swiatek advanced to the third round with a 6-2, 7-5 win over Caroline Garcia. Despite a second-set scare, Swiatek fought back from 3-1 down and saved a set point before closing out the match. British star Emma Raducanu battled past eighth-seeded Emma Navarro in a marathon match, winning 7-6 (8/6), 2-6, 7-6 (7/4) after



dal's record.

Veronika Kudermetova.

Faking Injury To Watch F1? Usman Khawaja Slams 'Shocking' Allegations



Australia's Test opener Usman Khawaja has strongly denied allegations that he faked a hamstring injury to attend the 2025 Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne. The controversy erupted after Queensland Head of Cricket Joe Dawes questioned Khawaja's absence from a Sheffield Shield match, claiming medical staff had found no signs of an injury. Khawaja, visibly frustrated, dismissed Dawes' claims as "categorically untrue." Speaking to reporters, he said, "Joe Dawes made some inflammatory

statements, which were really disappointing. The medical staff knew about my injury, and it's shocking to hear otherwise." Dawes had earlier criticized Khawaja's decision, suggesting that he had deliberately skipped the match. "It's disappointing he didn't play when he had the opportunity. We have players here who want to play," Dawes remarked. Khawaja expressed frustration that the issue was made public. "I wanted to keep this in-house, but that's no longer possible," he said.

Vaughan Backs BCCI's IPL Ban on Harry Brook

Former England captain Michael Vaughan has supported the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) over its decision to ban Harry Brook from the Indian Premier League (IPL) for two seasons. The England batter faced the ban after pulling out of IPL 2025 at the last minute, despite being bought by Delhi Capitals for ₹6.25 crore in last year's auction. Brook had earlier withdrawn from IPL 2024 following the death

of his grandmother. However, this time, he cited a need to focus on his England career, a move that triggered the automatic two-year ban under BCCI rules. The rule states that a foreign player who opts out after being picked at the auction—unless injured—faces a two-season suspension. Vaughan backed BCCI's stance, stating that Brook's decision disrupted the franchise. "I think they are right. The rules were clear.

You put yourself into the auction, get picked, and then pull out without an injury. He just didn't want to go. That affects the team," Vaughan said on the Club Prairie Fire podcast. While speculating that Brook could be England's future white-ball captain, Vaughan acknowledged that his decision to prioritize national duties would be welcomed by England fans. However, he emphasized that the IPL

had to enforce strict rules to prevent franchises from being left in a difficult position. Earlier this month, Brook apologized to Delhi Capitals and their supporters, saying, "I have made the very difficult decision to pull out of the upcoming IPL. It is a really important time for England cricket, and I want to fully commit to preparing for the upcoming series."





The much-awaited supernatural thriller *Odela 2*, starring Tamannaah Bhatia in the lead, is set for a worldwide theatrical release on April 17, 2025. Directed by Ashok Teja, the film marks the second installment in the *Odela* franchise, following *Odela Railway Station*. Announcing the release date, Sampath Nandi Teamworks shared on social media, “When darkness reigns and hope fades, ‘Shiva Shakti’ awakens. #Odela2 Grand release worldwide on

April 17th. Get ready for a divine thriller on the big screens.” The teaser, which was recently unveiled, showcases a gripping conflict between divine and dark forces. With a haunting tagline—“When the devil returns to haunt, the divine too returns”—the film promises a spine-chilling cinematic experience. One striking dialogue in the teaser, spoken by the dark force, states, “Water, fire, air, earth, and sky... all five elements are slaves to my might.” The visuals hint at an in-

tense battle where divine power rises to combat evil. Produced by D Madhu, *Odela 2* features music by Ajaneesh Loknath and cinematography by Soundar Rajan, with Rajeev Nair handling art direction. Tamannaah plays the role of a Saadhvi for the first time in her career, adding to the intrigue. The cast also includes Hebbah Patel, Dayanand Reddy, Murali Sharma, Sharath Lohitashwa, Srikanth Iyengar, and several others.

Skippping the spotlight! Blake Lively & Ryan Reynolds to miss Met Gala 2025

Hollywood power couple Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds will reportedly skip the 2025 Met Gala, marking their third consecutive absence from fashion’s biggest night. While speculation swirls around Lively’s ongoing legal dispute with Justin Baldoni, sources close to the couple confirm that their decision to miss Anna Wintour’s event was made well before the controversy surfaced.

Blake Lively, who attended the Met Gala ten times, last graced the event in 2022 as a co-chair alongside Reynolds, Regina King, and Lin-Manuel Miranda. That year, she stunned in a custom Atelier Versace gown that dramatically transformed on the steps of the Met Museum, leaving an indelible mark on the event’s history. In 2024, the couple skipped the Met Gala, prioritizing family

time with their children. They were recently seen together at SNL’s 50th anniversary celebration, signaling their focus on personal commitments. This year’s Met Gala, themed “Superfine: Tailoring Black Style,” will celebrate menswear and its evolving influence on fashion. The dress code is expected to allow for creative interpretations, giving attendees ample room to showcase unique styles.



TEST OTT Release.. R. Madhavan and Nayanthara’s Drama to Stream on Netflix



TEST, the gripping drama featuring R. Madhavan, Nayanthara, and Siddharth, is set to premiere on Netflix on April 4. Directed by S. Sashikanth, the film explores human emotions and decision-making beyond the realm of cricket. The movie, produced by YNOT Studios, marks Sashikanth’s directorial debut after years as a

producer. TEST follows the journey of a national-level cricketer, a scientist, and a teacher, whose lives intertwine as they face critical choices that shape their futures. The narrative focuses on personal and ethical dilemmas rather than just the sport. TEST will be available for streaming exclusively on Netflix, reaching audi-

ences across India and worldwide. Tamil cinema fans and drama enthusiasts can watch the film with a subscription. The film’s ensemble cast includes R. Madhavan, Nayanthara, Siddharth, and Meera Jasmine in key roles. Netflix’s collaboration with YNOT Studios aims to bring this compelling drama to a global audience.

THE LAST OF US Season 2 to Stream on JioHotstar from April 14



The highly anticipated second season of *The Last of Us* is set to premiere in 2025, with streaming on JioHotstar starting April 14. Adapted from Naughty Dog’s acclaimed video game series, the show has captivated audiences with its gripping storytelling and powerful performances. Production is underway

in Canada, with Season 2 delving deeper into themes of revenge, survival, and moral dilemmas. The storyline picks up five years after the events of the first season, following Ellie and Joel as they navigate an evolving world filled with new factions, intense conflicts, and infected threats. Showrunners Craig Maz-

za and Neil Druckmann promise a darker, emotionally charged narrative with expanded character arcs. Pedro Pascal and Bella Ramsey return as Joel and Ellie, alongside Gabriel Luna as Tommy and Rutina Wesley as Maria. New additions include Kaitlyn Dever as Abby, Isabela Merced as Dina, and Young Mazino as Jesse. The first season received widespread acclaim, boasting an IMDb rating of 8.8/10 and securing 24 Primetime Emmy nominations, winning eight. The series debut attracted over 4.7 million viewers, making it one of HBO’s most successful launches in recent years.

Was It All Just an Act? Chahal-Dhanashree Slammed After Divorce

Indian cricketer Yuzvendra Chahal and dancer Dhanashree Verma have officially parted ways after a Mumbai family court granted them a divorce on March 20. The couple, who married in 2020, had reportedly been living separately since June 2022, as revealed in court proceedings. However, the biggest shock for fans is the revelation that, despite their separation, the former couple appeared together on *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa 11* in 2023, showcasing romance that

many now believe was scripted for publicity. Fans Call Out ‘Faked’ Chemistry Dhanashree entered the dance reality show as a wild card contestant, making it to the finals. In one of the episodes, Chahal made a special appearance, and the couple was seen engaging in romantic gestures, fun games, and warm hugs. At the time, their on-screen chemistry was praised, but now, after their divorce news broke, social media users are accusing them of



misleading the public. With their joint petition confirming they had been separated for 18 months, many feel their Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa 11 appearance was a deliberate move to maintain a positive image before their legal split. ₹4.75 Crore Alimony Settlement

As per reports, Chahal has paid an alimony of ₹4.75 crore to Dhanashree Verma as part of their divorce settlement. While neither has addressed the public backlash, debates are raging online—with some defending their privacy, while others feel betrayed by their perceived act on national television.