

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

t°

H 33° C

L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

t°

H 35° C

L 26° C

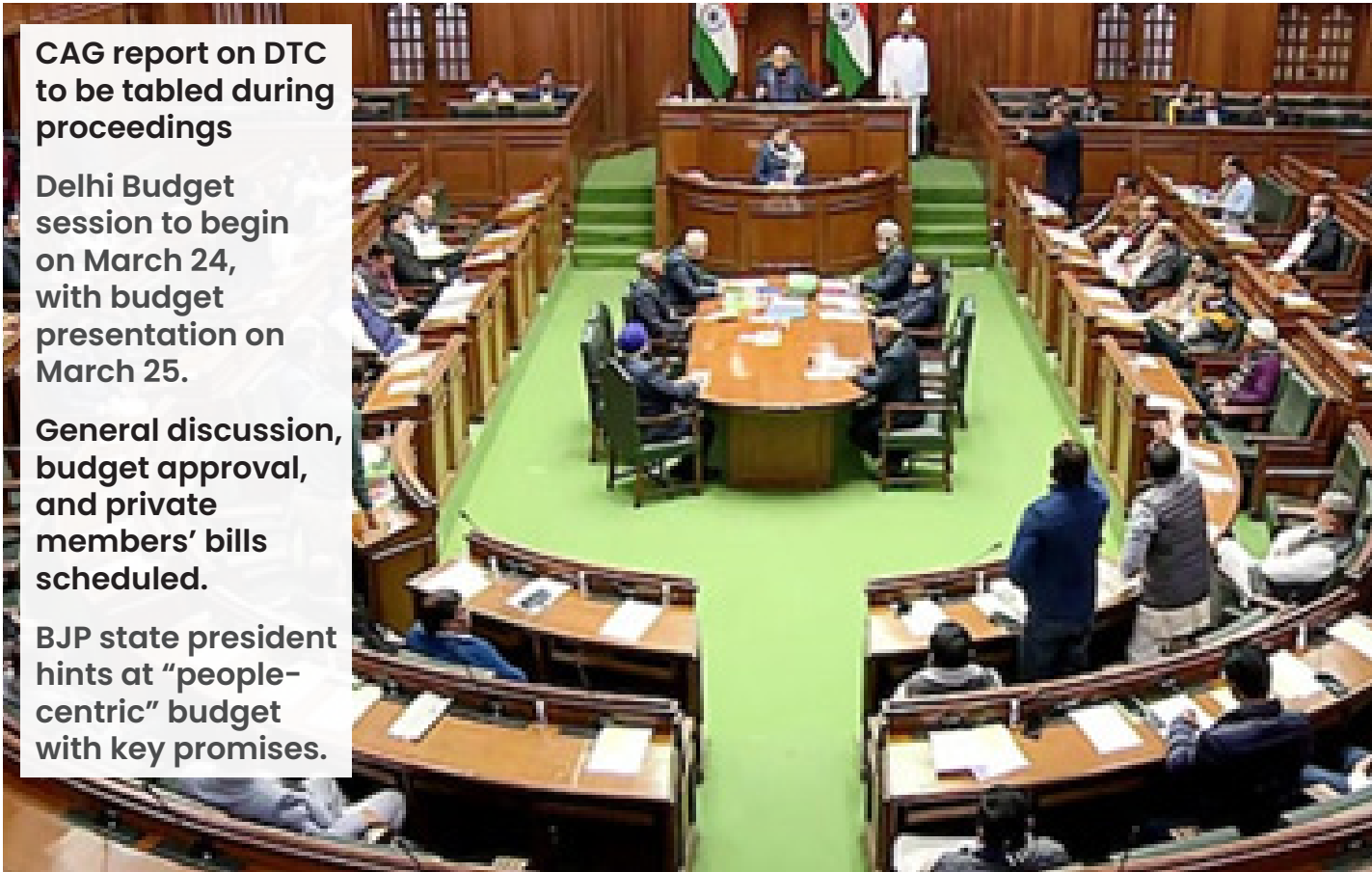
TIRUPATHI

t°

H 36° C

L 26° C

# Delhi Assembly Budget Session Begins Today



**CAG report on DTC to be tabled during proceedings**

**Delhi Budget session to begin on March 24, with budget presentation on March 25.**

**General discussion, budget approval, and private members' bills scheduled.**

**BJP state president hints at "people-centric" budget with key promises.**

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
The Budget session of the eighth Delhi Legislative Assembly is set to commence today, marking a crucial period for financial and policy discussions in the state. Speaker Vijender Gupta confirmed that the session will begin in the Assembly Hall of the Old Secretariat, with the budget presentation scheduled for March 25. Addressing the media on Sunday, Gupta stated, "Tomorrow is the first day of the Budget Session. The budget will be presented on March 25. The CAG report will also be tabled during the session." The session is expected to run from March 24 to March 28, though it may be extended if necessary.

**CAG Report on DTC to be Tabled**  
A key agenda item for the session will be the tabling of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report on the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC). This will be the third CAG report presented in the House, following the previous reports on excise policy and health services tabled during the February Assembly session. The budget session will outline the financial priorities and development roadmap of the newly-elected government. After the budget is presented, a general discussion will follow, allowing lawmakers to analyze financial allocations and policy initiatives before the final approval vote on March 27.

**Legislative Schedule and Procedures**  
The session will also include a Question Hour on March 24, 26, 27, and 28, where ministers will respond to queries from MLAs. March 28 is designated for Private Members' Business, allowing legislators to introduce bills and resolutions, which require advance notices. Additionally, issues of public importance under Rule 280 must be submitted a day prior, with a ballot determining the priority of discussions. To ensure order and efficiency, the Speaker has issued directions for members to adhere to procedural rules, maintain decorum, and follow seating arrangements. The quorum bell will ring daily at 10:55 AM to mark the start of proceedings.

**Expectations from the Budget**  
BJP Delhi state president Virendra Sachdeva hinted at a "people-centric" budget aligned with the party's election promises. "The upcoming budget will reflect the commitments made in our Sankalp Patra. I am confident there will be something for everyone," he said, adding that the government aims to set Delhi on a path of rapid development. With key financial allocations, policy decisions, and governance priorities at stake, the session is expected to be closely watched by political observers and the public alike.

## Ahead of Mayor Polls, 14 MLAs Nominated to MCD

**Speaker Gupta's move could tilt the balance in favour of the BJP**

**Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta nominates 14 MLAs to MCD.**

**BJP secures 11 out of the 14 nominations, strengthening its position.**

**BJP reaches the majority mark of 132 votes, boosting its mayoral prospects.**

**Congress likely to abstain, reducing the effective majority to 128.**



**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
In a significant political development ahead of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) mayoral elections, Delhi Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta has nominated 14 MLAs to the civic body for the financial year 2025-26. The move is expected to strengthen the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) chances of securing the Mayor's post in the upcoming elections scheduled for April. The nominations, made under Section 3(3) (b)(ii) of the Delhi Municipal Corporation (DMC) Act, 1957, include 11 BJP MLAs and three from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). This strategic decision is seen as a major advantage for the BJP as it aims to regain control of the MCD.

**BJP inches closer to majority**  
With these nominations, the BJP now has 113 councillor votes, supplemented by 11 MLA votes and support from seven Lok Sabha MPs. The potential backing of AAP Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal, who may align with the BJP, could further boost the party's tally to 132 votes—securing a clear majority without the need for cross-voting. On the other hand, AAP holds 116 council-

lor votes, along with three MLA votes, two Rajya Sabha MP votes, and support from one independent councillor, bringing its total to 122 votes. The Congress, with its eight councillors, has indicated it will abstain from voting, reducing the effective majority to 128 and further improving the BJP's prospects.

**Political impact on the mayoral race**  
A senior BJP leader stated, "With 11 of our MLAs nominated to the MCD, we are in a strong position. Many AAP councillors are also inclined to support us, paving the way for a triple-engine government—at the Centre, in Delhi, and within the MCD. This will ensure better governance and faster execution of development initiatives in the capital." This mayoral election follows AAP's narrow victory in November 2024, where its candidate won by just three votes. With shifting political dynamics and strategic appointments, the upcoming contest is set to be a crucial test for both parties. As the election approaches, all eyes will be on whether the BJP's calculated moves will translate into a decisive victory, reshaping the power structure within Delhi's civic administration.

## AAP Reshuffles Leadership

**Sends Sisodia to Punjab, Bharadwaj gets Delhi charge**  
**Party revamps state units after electoral setback**

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## Probe Report Shows Burnt Cash at Delhi judge's house



**Justice Yashwant Varma refutes allegations of hidden money**

**Claims fire broke out in a storeroom near staff quarters on March 14**

**Asserts no cash was placed in the storeroom by him or his family**

**Questions credibility of the evidence presented in the video**

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
The Supreme Court on Saturday made public a report containing images and a video purportedly showing burnt cash at the residence of Justice Yashwant Varma, a sitting judge of the Delhi High Court. The move fol-

lows an in-house inquiry ordered by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna after allegations surfaced that unaccounted cash was found at the judge's bungalow during a fire-fighting operation on March 14. The report, uploaded on the Supreme Court's website, includes three photographs and a video allegedly depicting semi-burnt currency discovered in a storeroom on the premises. These visuals were shared with Delhi High Court Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya by Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora. Meanwhile, Justice Varma has categorically denied the allegations, terming them a conspiracy to malign him. Justice Varma, in a written response to Justice Upadhyaya, stated that he was in Madhya Pradesh with his wife on the night of March 14 and only his daughter and elderly mother were at home. He explained that the fire broke out in a storeroom near the staff quarters of his official residence, a space used to store miscellaneous items, including unused furniture, bottles, and garden tools. "This room is unlocked and accessible both from the official front gate as well as the backdoor of the staff quarters. It is disconnected from the main residence and is surely not a room in my house as has been portrayed," he said. According to the judge, his daughter and private

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# 1.2 million vehicles in Delhi affixed with colour-coded stickers

Move aimed at curbing pollution; compliance continues across NCR

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Over 1.2 million of the 2.5 million vehicles in Delhi have affixed colour-coded stickers (CCS) to indicate fuel type, the Delhi government informed the Supreme Court in an affidavit earlier this week. The court had earlier directed states in the National Capital Region (NCR) to ensure the roll-out of CCS, even for vehicles registered before April 2019, when they were mandated under the Motor Vehicles Act.

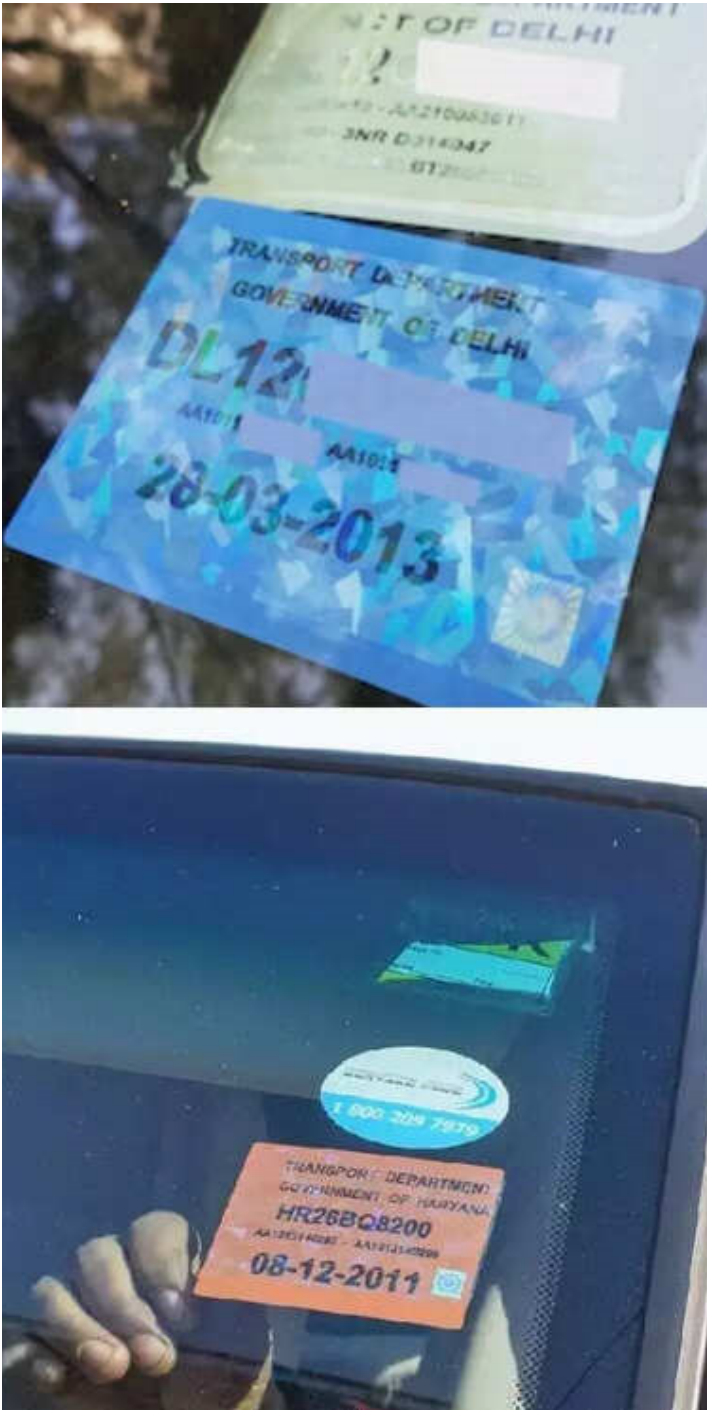
A bench headed by Justice Abhay S Oka took up the affidavit submitted by Delhi and the Union of India on the nationwide implementation of high-security registration plates (HSRP) and CCS. The matter was adjourned for the next week. The government stated that the sticker roll-out remains an ongoing process and that all vehicles in Delhi will receive CCS “at the earliest.”

Under the CCS rule, blue hologram stickers are affixed to petrol and CNG vehicles, orange for diesel ones, and grey for the rest. These stickers, also known as the “third registration plate,” are provided by car dealers along with hologram-based registration number plates.

The Supreme Court’s January 27 order had directed states to publicize the initiative and facilitate vehicle owners in obtaining CCS, considering it an essential tool in implementing the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) to combat pollution. Vehicular pollution remains a key contributor to rising levels of harmful gases and particulate matter in Delhi.

According to the affidavit, HSRP coverage in Delhi has significantly improved, with fewer than 200,000 vehicles lacking both HSRP and CCS. Between November 2024 and February 2025, the Delhi government brought over 400,000 vehicles under HSRP coverage. Additionally, the transport department issued 2,896 challans for the absence of CCS and 1,182 for missing HSRP between October 2024 and February 2025.

NCR states reported varied levels of compliance, with Haryana at 67% HSRP coverage, Rajasthan at 82%, and Uttar Pradesh at 52%. Meanwhile, the Delhi government has made it mandatory to have both HSRP and CCS for obtaining a pollution-under-control (PUC) certificate since February 27. Violation of the CCS rule attracts a minimum fine of ₹2,000, escalating to ₹10,000 or even imprisonment for repeat offences under the Motor Vehicles Act.



# Delhi Assembly to onboard NeVA platform for digital governance



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi government on Saturday signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA) and the Union government to implement the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA), marking a significant step towards digital governance. NeVA, developed under the guidance of MoPA, aims to digitize legislative processes, providing real-time access to house business, documents, and seamless coordination among legislators and secretariat staff. The initiative is also expected to reduce paper consumption, making legislative work more efficient and environmentally friendly. Delhi becomes the 28th legislature to adopt NeVA, with Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta setting a target to implement it within 100 days. “The agreement signifies Delhi’s commit-

ment to a paperless and transparent legislative system, aligning with the Prime Minister’s vision of ‘One Nation, One Application,’” an official said. Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju lauded the move, emphasizing its importance in ensuring uniformity and efficiency in legislative operations nationwide. “With advancements in technology, it was essential to adopt such a system to speed up work and maintain consistency across the country,” he said. Rijiju also highlighted that while many states had already implemented NeVA, Delhi’s participation was crucial as the national capital should lead by example. The implementation of NeVA is expected to enhance accessibility, transparency, and overall effectiveness in legislative proceedings, paving the way for a more modern governance framework in Delhi.

# JNU Professor Withdraws from SAU Event in Protest

Alleges authoritarianism, supports suspended faculty members

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) professor Rohit Azad has withdrawn from a scheduled seminar at South Asian University (SAU), citing solidarity with colleagues and students protesting against the institution’s alleged authoritarianism. Azad was invited to speak on “The Political Economy of Climate Change” on April 9, 2025, in a seminar series organized by SAU’s Department of Sociology.

In a statement, Azad, who teaches at JNU’s Centre for Studies in Economic Studies and Planning, said his decision was not aimed at the academic departments or his colleagues but was instead a response to the university administration’s “apathy and authoritarianism.” He specifically condemned SAU’s handling of faculty suspensions and administrative decisions.

Azad highlighted the suspension of four faculty members—Snehashish Bhattacharya (Economics), Srinivas Burra (Legal Studies), Irfanullah Farooqi (Sociology), and Ravi Kumar (So-



ciology)—on June 16, 2023, for questioning what they described as the administration’s “arbitrary decisions.” “Instead of trying to resolve matters, the university has escalated tensions. Indian faculty members were particularly targeted for holding independent views that did not align with the administration’s directives,” Azad stated.

**Allegations of forced resignation**

Azad also alleged that SAU pressured a prominent sociologist, an international faculty member from a SAARC country, into resigning. However, the university has not issued a public response to these claims. The controversy surrounding SAU’s handling of faculty dissent has been ongoing, with students and academics voicing concerns over academic freedom and administrative overreach. Azad’s withdrawal from the event is seen as a symbolic move in support of those who have been challenging the university’s policies.

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# Probe Report Shows Burnt Cash at Delhi judge’s house

secretary alerted the fire department when the fire broke out around midnight. He maintained that neither he nor his family members had ever placed cash in the storeroom. “The suggestion that one would store cash in an open, freely accessible and commonly used storeroom near the staff quarters or in an outhouse verges on the incredible and incredulous,” he remarked. Justice Varma further stated that when he returned to Delhi on March 15, there was no visible sign of any cash in the storeroom. He emphasized that his family follows documented financial transactions through banking channels, UPI, and cards. Addressing the video allegedly showing burnt cash, the judge said, “Assuming without admitting that the video was taken immediately

at the time of the incident, none of it appears to have been recovered or seized. The staff were never shown any remnants of cash on-site.” He questioned the absence of official documentation of any seizure and stated that no sacks of burnt currency were presented to his household staff. “What baffles me is the complete absence of any sacks of allegedly burnt currency which were ever recovered or seized,” he said. The controversy has raised serious questions about the circumstances surrounding the alleged recovery and the evidence presented in the probe. With the Supreme Court’s unprecedented disclosure of the investigation report, the case has drawn significant public and legal attention.

# Indian Techie Detained in Qatar for Over 3 Months on Data Theft Charges

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

India is actively assisting Amit Gupta, a Vadodara-based Tech Mahindra employee, who has been detained in Qatar for over three months on allegations of data theft. His family insists that he is innocent and is seeking urgent intervention from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). Gupta was detained by Qatari authorities on January 1 and remains in custody as part of an ongoing probe. His parents traveled to Qatar in an attempt to meet him but were unsuccessful. His mother, Pushpa Gupta, confirmed that the Indian Embassy is in touch with legal representatives and Qatari officials but has received no positive response regarding his release. An official familiar with the matter stated, “Our embassy continues to provide all possible assistance and is closely following the case.” However, specific details regarding the allegations against Gupta remain undisclosed. BJP MP Hemang Joshi, speaking to the media, confirmed that Gupta had been working in Qatar for a decade before being detained by state security personnel. The family as-



serts that he is wrongfully accused and is demanding an immediate resolution. This incident follows the 2022 detention of eight former Indian Navy officers in Qatar, who were sentenced to death but later released in February 2024 after diplomatic intervention. Gupta’s case has now raised fresh concerns about the safety of Indian professionals working in Qatar. India continues to engage with Qatari authorities, but Gupta’s future remains uncertain.

# AAP Reshuffles Leadership

- Sends Sisodia to Punjab, Bhara-dwaj gets Delhi charge
- Party revamps state units after electoral setback

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Weeks after its defeat in the Delhi Assembly elections, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has announced a major restructuring of its leadership. Former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has been appointed as the party's Punjab in-charge, while former minister Saurabh Bharadwaj will take over as Delhi state convenor, replacing Gopal Rai. The changes were finalized in a meeting of AAP's Political Affairs Committee (PAC) on Friday. The party has also reshuffled leadership in other states, assigning new responsibilities to key members. Former environment minister Gopal Rai has been tasked with heading the Gujarat unit, while Pankaj Gupta will oversee party affairs in Goa.

AAP's restructuring amid electoral losses  
AAP's leadership overhaul comes in the wake of its recent electoral defeat in Delhi, where the party lost power after 11 years. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ended its 27-year absence from the Delhi Assembly by securing 48 seats, while AAP managed to win only 22 seats. Several senior AAP leaders, including Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Rakhi Bidlan, Satyendar Jain, and Somnath Bharti, lost their respective constituencies. After the PAC meeting, AAP general secretary (organization) Sandeep Pathak stated that the leadership changes aim to strengthen the party's base ahead of upcoming elections in Punjab, Gujarat, and Goa. Pathak himself, a Rajya Sabha MP from Punjab, has been named in charge of the Chhattisgarh unit.



Mehraj Malik has been appointed as the new chief of AAP's Jammu and Kashmir unit. Additionally, the party has named co-in-charges for various states, including Satyendar Jain for Punjab, Pathak for Gujarat, and Ankush Narang, Abhash Chandel, and Deepak Singla for Goa.

Leaders react to new responsibilities  
Following the announcement, Kejriwal congratulated the newly appointed state heads and encouraged them to strengthen AAP's presence across regions. Saurabh Bharadwaj, the newly appointed Delhi convenor, acknowledged the party's performance in the Assembly elections, stating, "AAP secured 43.5% votes, just 2% less than BJP. Half of Delhi supported AAP, and we must take care of them as well as those who voted for BJP." Meanwhile, Manish Sisodia expressed confidence in AAP's growing influence in Punjab, where it currently holds power under Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. "The impact of AAP's governance in Punjab is visible. Now, we need to accelerate the transformation. The Bhagwant Mann government will continue working for the welfare of the people," he stated.

# Congress seeks special package for villages in Delhi ahead of budget

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Ahead of the budget presentation for the national capital, the Delhi Congress has urged Chief Minister Rekha Gupta to allocate a special package for villages, rural areas, and unauthorised colonies. The party accused the previous AAP government of failing to implement development projects in these areas, leading to worsening infrastructure and poor living conditions.

Delhi Congress President Devender Yadav, speaking at a press conference on Saturday, criticized the AAP's governance, stating that the party used rural residents as vote banks but did little to address their concerns. He highlighted issues such as the severe water crisis in unauthorised colonies, blaming the Delhi Jal Board for its inaction. Meanwhile, the Delhi government has termed the upcoming Viksit Delhi Budget as a "people's budget" and claimed that it is based on public suggestions. Officials revealed that around 10,000 recommendations were received for the 2025-26 budget, with a focus on women's economic empowerment, education, healthcare, pollution control, Yamuna cleaning, and waterlogging. Yadav also called on the BJP-led government to fulfill its election prom-



ises, including granting ownership rights to residents of unauthorised colonies. He pointed to major civic issues such as overflowing sewers, broken roads, faulty sewage pipelines, and inadequate educational and sports facilities in these areas. Delhi budget session schedule  
The budget session is set to begin on March 24, with the budget presentation scheduled for March 25. A general discussion will take place on March 26, followed by its consideration and passage on March 27. The session will conclude on March 28 with discussions on private members' bills. As political parties gear up for the budget discussions, the focus remains on whether the government will address long-pending demands for rural development and basic civic amenities.

# BJP Demands AAP's Apology Over Commission Allegations



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi  
The BJP on Friday strongly criticized AAP leader Atishi for alleging that BJP ministers were pressuring Delhi government officials for a 10 percent commission on government projects. The party demanded an apology from the former Chief Minister, warning of legal consequences if she failed to retract her statement. At a press conference, Atishi had accused BJP ministers of abusing officials, claiming that many officers sought transfers to escape intimidation and extortion tactics. She alleged that those who resisted the demand for commissions faced threats of suspension. Atishi further stated that the officials being targeted were the same ones who had played a crucial role in improving Delhi's public schools, hospitals, and Mohalla Clinics under the AAP government. In response, Delhi BJP president

Virendra Sachdeva dismissed the allegations, stating that AAP's claims were contradictory. "For ten years, Arvind Kejriwal blamed the Central government for obstructing his administration. Now, Atishi is claiming that AAP successfully developed Delhi with the same officials. Which version is true?" he questioned. Sachdeva further challenged AAP's governance, pointing out issues like the financial crisis in the Delhi Jal Board, poor road conditions, severe waterlogging during the 2024 monsoon, and the lack of new hospitals and science and commerce subjects in government schools. He also raised concerns over corruption cases involving former AAP ministers. With both parties engaged in a heated exchange, the political atmosphere in Delhi remains tense, as the BJP continues to demand an apology while AAP stands firm on its accusations.

# Religion-based reservation violates Constitution: RSS

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

RSS General Secretary Dattatreya Hosabale has strongly opposed religion-based reservation, stating that it goes against the Constitution and the vision of B R Ambedkar. His remarks come amid the ongoing debate over the Karnataka government's decision to introduce a 4% reservation for Muslims in government contracts. Speaking at the Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha, the highest decision-making body of the RSS, Hosabale asserted that the Constitution does not permit reservations based on religion. He cited previous instances where High Courts and the Supreme Court struck down similar attempts in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. "Religion-based reservation is not accepted in the Constitution authored by Babasaheb Ambedkar. Anybody doing it is going against the wishes of the architect of our Constitution," he said. Hosabale also spoke on India's historical narratives, criticising the glorifica-



tion of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb over his brother Dara Shikoh, who he said believed in social harmony. He praised historical figures like Maharana Pratap for resisting Mughal rule, calling them "freedom fighters." He claimed that people with an "invader mindset" continue to pose a threat to India's ethos, adding, "We should stand with those who are with the Indian ethos." Hosabale clarified that the RSS does not interfere in the government's daily affairs but acknowledged that Sangh-affiliated organisations communicate public

concerns to policymakers. On the Ram temple in Ayodhya, he remarked that its construction was not just an RSS achievement, but a collective victory for Hindu society. Reaffirming the RSS's ideological stance, he stated, "Being a Hindu is not just a religious identity, but a nationalistic, spiritual, and civilizational expression." He acknowledged the challenges in eradicating casteism and social inequalities, noting that Sangh Shakhas serve as platforms for social unity, including inter-caste marriages. Hosabale emphasized the need for "One Nation, One Culture," advocating for the decolonization of mindsets. "A person who tried to destroy this country and its cultural identity will remain an outsider. Anyone in India who tries to present a distorted narrative should be challenged," he asserted. As the debate over religion-based reservation intensifies, RSS's firm stance aligns with past court verdicts, challenging any state policy that contradicts constitutional principles.

# Punjab's Excise Revenue Crosses ₹10,000 Crore for First Time

TPN Correspondent | Punjab

Punjab Finance, Planning, Excise, and Taxation Minister Harpal Singh Cheema on Saturday announced that the state's excise revenue has crossed ₹10,000 crore for the first time, marking an "unprecedented" growth over the past three years. The revenue has surged from ₹6,254 crore to over ₹10,200 crore, setting a new record. "For the first time in Punjab's history, excise revenue will surpass the five-digit mark, with a target of ₹10,145 crore for the financial year 2024-25," Cheema stated. Strong Response to Liquor License Allotment  
Cheema highlighted the overwhelming response to the ongoing e-tender process for retail liquor license allotment for the 2025-26 fiscal year. Out of 207 retail liquor groups, 179 have been successfully allotted as of March 20, generating ₹8,681



crore along with an additional ₹871 crore as a premium against the reserved price of ₹7,810 crore. The minister expressed confidence in achieving the ₹11,020 crore target for the 2025-26 fiscal year, stating that the department could potentially surpass ₹11,800 crore, reflecting a 16% increase

over the previous year's excise revenue. Taking a swipe at previous administrations, Cheema criticized the Congress and Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP governments for poor excise revenue performance. He pointed out that during the Congress regime (2002-2007), excise revenue declined by 6.9%, dropping from ₹1,462 crore in 2002 to ₹1,363 crore in 2007. He also alleged that under the SAD-BJP rule, excise revenue fell from ₹4,796 crore in 2015-16 to ₹4,400 crore in 2016-17 due to policies favoring certain groups. Similarly, during the Congress tenure from 2017 to 2022, revenue remained stagnant, reaching only ₹6,200 crore by 2021-22. Cheema further recalled the tragic hooch incident under the Congress government, which claimed 128 lives. With the current growth trend, the Punjab government aims to further strengthen its excise revenue, ensuring transparency and efficiency in the sector.

## Four pro-Khalistan BKI terror operatives charged by NIA in Chandigarh grenade attack case

NIA charges Pakistan-based Rinda, US-based Happy Passi, and two local operatives under UAPA

**TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh**  
The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has charge-sheeted four operatives of the pro-Khalistan Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) for their involvement in the September 2024 Chandigarh grenade attack. Among them are Pakistan-based designated terrorist Harwinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda and US-based Harpreet Singh alias Happy Passi, who were identified as the key handlers behind the attack. In its charge sheet filed before the Special NIA Court in Chandigarh, the agency has charged all four under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the Explosive Substances Act, and other related provisions for orchestrating and facilitating the attack.

**NIA's Findings**  
According to the NIA, BKI operatives provided logistical support, terror funds, weapons, and ammunition to local attackers in Chandigarh. Investigations revealed that Rinda and Happy Passi had recruited and directed two local operatives, Rohan Masih and Vishal Masih, to carry out the attack. The duo conducted reconnaissance on the target before executing the attack under direct instructions from their handlers.

**September 2024 Chandigarh Grenade Attack**  
On September 11, 2024, a grenade was hurled at a house in Sector 10, Chandigarh, targeting a retired Punjab Police officer. The attack, carried out by Rohan Masih and Vishal Ma-



sih, caused property damage but did not result in any casualties. The accused were later arrested by the Punjab Police with the assistance of central agencies.

**Resurgence of Pro-Khalistan Terrorism**  
Pro-Khalistan terrorism, which peaked in the 1980s following Operation Blue Star, has seen renewed activity in recent years. Groups like Babbar Khalsa and Khalistan Commando Force were involved in significant violent incidents, including assassinations of political figures. While security measures had largely suppressed the movement by the mid-1990s, recent intelligence suggests efforts to revive it with external support.

The NIA continues to investigate cross-border links and funding channels used by pro-Khalistan operatives, emphasizing the need for stringent counterterrorism measures.

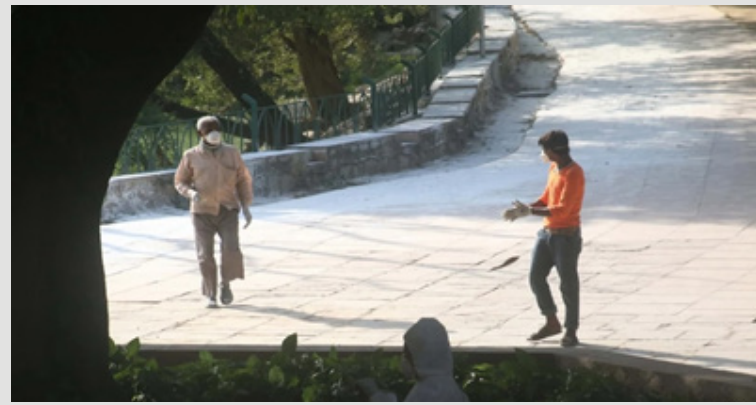
## Sex Racket Busted in Delhi; 23 Rescued

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
Delhi Police has busted a sex racket operating in Paharganj, rescuing 23 women, including three minors and 10 Nepalese nationals, officials said on Sunday. Seven individuals involved in human trafficking were arrested in a joint operation conducted by teams from Paharganj Police Station, Shardhanand Marg Police Post, and Himmatgarh Police Post. According to police, the accused lured women from West Bengal, Nepal, and other states under false pretenses and forced them into prostitution. The victims were housed in a room in Paharganj's main market before being sent to various hotels. Before the raid, surveillance teams deployed decoy customers at suspected locations to confirm illegal activities. "Once the operations were verified, multiple locations, including hotels, were raided. The victims were found being transported on scooters to different locations," a senior officer said. Police identified the arrested suspects as Nurshed Alam (21), Md Rahul Alam (22), Abdul Mannan (30), Taushif Rexa, Shamim Alam (29), Md Jarul (26), and Monish (26). Further investigations are underway to trace other links in the trafficking network.



## Two teenagers found hanging from a tree in Deer Park

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
A teenage boy and girl were found hanging from a tree in Deer Park, Hauz Khas, early on Sunday, with police suspecting it to be a case of suicide. According to officials, a PCR call was received at 6:31 am from a security guard reporting the discovery of the bodies. The boy, estimated to be around 17 years old, was wearing a black T-shirt and blue jeans, while the girl, also believed to be of similar age, was dressed in a green dress. Investigators are working to establish their identities and determine the circumstances that led to the incident. As of now, no suicide note has been recovered, and further inquiry is underway, police said.



## 65-year-old stabbed to death in northwest Delhi

**TPN Correspondent | Delhi**  
A 65-year-old man was stabbed to death, and five others were injured in a violent clash between two families in northwest Delhi's Wazirpur JJ colony on Friday. Police have booked both families for murder, attempted murder, stone pelting, and assault. The deceased, identified as Radhe Shyam, is survived by his wife Kamla Devi, 58, and three children. Among the injured are Md Jamal, 44, his son Md Irshad, 20, and three others, who are currently undergoing treatment. According to locals, the altercation began as a minor dispute among children in the neighborhood, which escalated when adults intervened, leading to stone pelting and physical assault. Police said two people have been taken into custody so far. Kamla Devi alleged that despite calling the police twice, no action was taken. "They pelted stones at us. We had to lock our children on the first floor for their safety. My husband went out only to stop the fight, but Irshad killed him. Nobody helped us. We called autos, but they refused to come. I had to walk for almost two kilometers before finally convincing a two-wheeler rider to help. My husband could have been saved," she said. Officials confirmed that a police call was received in the morning, and the situation was initially resolved. However, the fight reignited in the evening. DCP (Northwest) Bhisham Singh stated, "A dispute between two groups escalated into violence, leading to injuries. Radhe Shyam was declared brought dead at Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital. The injured are receiving treatment. We have registered cases of murder and attempted murder, and legal action has been initiated."

## ED Attaches ₹42 Lakh Assets in ₹8-Crore Post Office Fraud Case



**TPN Correspondent | Jalandhar**  
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached movable and immov-

able assets worth ₹42 lakh under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in connection with an ₹8.48-crore

fraud involving post office saving schemes in Jalandhar. The ED initiated its probe based on a 2018 FIR registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against Sanjeev Kumar, former sub-postmaster of Dakhni Gate, Nakodar sub-office, Jalandhar, and others for allegedly misappropriating public funds through fraudulent transactions. According to an ED spokesperson, Sanjeev Kumar, during his tenure, created fake savings accounts and manipulated genuine ones to fraudulently withdraw ₹8.48 crore. The investigation revealed that he laundered the money through multiple bank accounts belonging to himself and his associates. The ED found that the proceeds of the crime were layered and integrated into the financial system through a series of transactions. A significant portion of the funds was withdrawn in cash and further laundered through various means for personal benefit. With the attachment of assets worth ₹42 lakh, the ED continues its crackdown on financial fraud linked to public savings schemes.

## Delhi Woman Caught After Sneaking Into 5-Star Hotel for Free Breakfast

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

A Delhi-based content creator, Nishu Tiwari, attempted to get a free breakfast at a five-star hotel by pretending to be a guest but was caught when hotel staff realized the deception. She ultimately had to pay ₹3,600 for the meal after her ploy was exposed. Tiwari, known for her "Unethical Life Hacks" series, dressed in pyjamas and carried a robe to blend in as a hotel guest. She and her team member drove to a luxury hotel in Chanakyapuri and confidently provided a fake room number to gain entry to the breakfast buffet. The trick worked, and they enjoyed a lavish meal without raising suspicion. However, things took a turn when her team member forgot their phone inside the breakfast area. When the staff called the room number she had given, they discovered that a different guest was actually staying there. As she returned to collect the phone, hotel staff questioned



her again, and she admitted to the act.

Tiwari tried to play it off as an honest mistake, claiming they had mistakenly visited the wrong hotel. However, she was ultimately asked to pay for the meal, which cost ₹3,600. Viral Video Sparks Mixed Reactions The video of her act went viral,



drawing both amusement and criticism online. While some users laughed at her stunt, others questioned the morality of promoting such behavior. One comment read, "What kind of joker are you?" while another said, "This is irresponsible. Many might try it after watching your video." Some even doubted the authen-

ticity of the video, speculating that the hotel staff might have been in on the prank. However, Tiwari dismissed such claims, stating that hotels generally don't stop guests from filming themselves. Despite the controversy, her "life hack" backfired, proving that there's indeed no such thing as a free breakfast.

## Pastor Bajinder Singh Caught on Video Assaulting Woman Holding Baby



**TPN Correspondent | Punjab**  
Controversial self-styled preacher Bajinder Singh, who is already facing a sexual harassment case, has sparked fresh outrage after a viral video allegedly showed him assaulting a woman holding a baby. In the widely circulated clip, Singh is seen throwing a pile of papers at a woman seated with a child in his office. Moments later, the woman approaches him, following which he appears to push her. The video further shows rising tension as the two engage in a heated argument. Others present in the room intervene to separate them and prevent the situation from escalat-

ing further. So far, neither Bajinder Singh nor the police have issued any official statement regarding the incident. Facing Multiple Sexual Harassment Cases This latest controversy follows Singh's recent court appearance in Mohali related to a 2018 sexual harassment case. The Mohali court had issued non-bailable warrants (NBWs) against him on March 3. Singh was arrested in July 2018 at Delhi airport while trying to flee to London after being accused of raping a woman from Zirakpur. The victim alleged that Singh lured her into his team of vol-

unteers, later assaulted her at his Mohali residence, and even recorded the act to blackmail her. She finally lodged a complaint in April 2018, following which Singh went into hiding. Additionally, on March 2, 2024, an FIR for a separate sexual harassment case was registered against him in Jalandhar. However, he has not been arrested in that case, with Mohali police stating they have received no official communication from their Jalandhar counterparts. Currently, Singh is out on bail in the Zirakpur case, while his legal troubles continue to mount.

## Chandigarh MC Plans to Transfer 262 km of Roads to UT Admin



**TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh**  
Struggling with a severe financial crunch, the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation (MC) is considering transferring all V3 roads (sector-dividing roads) under its jurisdiction—spanning 262 km—to the UT administration for carpeting and maintenance. The proposal will be discussed in the civic body's

general House meeting on Tuesday. Road Repairs Delayed Due to Lack of Funds With a road network of nearly 2,000 km under its management, MC has been unable to conduct essential repairs, leaving the city's roads in deteriorating condition. Of the total network, V3 roads, totaling 68 stretches, require

immediate attention, with an estimated carpeting cost of ₹26 crore. Due to insufficient funds, carpeting work from the past three years remains pending, leading to pothole-filled roads and increasing complaints from residents. Road repairs are ideally carried out in March-April and October-November, but MC officials warn that another crucial season could be lost if funds are not arranged soon. MC plans to charge private firms an advertisement fee for maintaining 35 roundabouts across the city. The highest bidder will be granted advertising rights, with fees increasing by 10% annually. A new rule proposes a six-month validity for fire safety applications, requiring applicants to address discrepancies within this period or face automatic rejection and forfeiture of the application fee. The finance and contract committee (F&CC) will discuss a ₹32 lakh plan for planting trees and shrubs around the dumping ground to enhance its aesthetics. If approved, the transfer of V3 roads to the UT administration could ease MC's financial burden while ensuring timely maintenance of crucial city roads.

## Meerut Murder Accused Suffer Severe Withdrawal, Demand Drugs in Jail

**TPN Correspondent | Meerut**  
Muskan Rastogi and Sahil Shukla, the prime accused in the gruesome murder of merchant navy employee Saurabh Rajput, are facing severe drug withdrawal in Meerut District Jail. The duo, both 27, are refusing food and aggressively demanding narcotics, including marijuana and morphine, forcing jail authorities to put them under strict medical supervision. **Severe Addiction and Violent Withdrawal** According to jail officials, both accused have exhibited extreme dependency on injectable drugs. Muskan and Sahil were arrested for murdering Saurabh on March 4, chopping his body into pieces, and concealing it in a cement-filled drum. After attempting to erase evidence, they traveled to Himachal Pradesh, where they allegedly played Holi, cut a cake, and took celebratory photos before returning to Meerut on March 17. Once in jail, their drug dependency became evident. Muskan's health deteriorated on the first night, and doctors diagnosed her with severe addiction. She repeatedly demanded morphine injections, while Sahil, in a state of extreme restlessness, insisted on getting marijuana.

**Strict Monitoring in Jail** Authorities have taken additional precautions to prevent them from harming themselves or others. Jail sources revealed that the accused had been regular users of injectable drugs, leading to intense withdrawal symptoms. The jail's de-addiction center has begun treating them to manage the withdrawal process. Despite medical intervention, Muskan and Sahil have refused to eat, which officials say is a common symptom of withdrawal. Medical experts estimate that it will take at least ten days for them to regain some stability. With heightened security and round-the-clock monitoring, prison authorities remain on high alert as the accused continue to struggle with withdrawal symptoms.



## GMADA Earns ₹1,986 Crore from Sale of 368 Sites in E-Auction

**TPN Correspondent | Mohali**  
The Greater Mohali Area Development Authority (GMADA) generated ₹1,986.82 crore in revenue through the sale of 368 properties during an e-auction held from March 12 to 22. A total of 453 sites were put up for bidding, including residential, commercial, and mixed-use properties in Mohali and New Chandigarh. A mixed-use site spanning 18,223 square meters in Aerocity was sold to Jalandhar-based Gaurav Infra LLP for ₹264.69 crore. Another mixed-use site (14,059 square meters) in Aerocity fetched ₹189.36 crore, secured by Springstone Developers LLP. Krishna Infra Projects acquired a similar property (13,766.74 square meters) in Aerocity for ₹188.14 crore. MGR Trading Company purchased a commercial site in Sector 68 for ₹83 crore. Despite the high earnings, 85 of the 453 sites found no buyers, including all hotel, booth, and school sites. Additionally, five mixed-use sites, two commercial properties, 16 SCOs, and 45 residential plots remained unsold. This auction surpassed GMADA's previous sale in October 2024, which earned ₹1,893.80 crore from 345 properties ahead of Diwali.



## Himachal buses attacked, defaced with pro-Khalistan graffiti in Punjab



**TPN Correspondent | Shimla**  
In a series of attacks on Himachal Pradesh buses in Punjab, unidentified miscreants smashed windshields and scribbled pro-Khalistan slogans on Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC) buses. Following these incidents, Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri announced that HRTC buses will no longer be parked overnight in Punjab until the safety of passengers and vehicles is assured by the Punjab government. The attacks occurred on Friday night at the Amritsar bus stand, where four HRTC buses were vandalized. Some buses bound for Bilaspur, Dehra, and Una were damaged, while pro-Khalistan slogans were written on a Hamirpur-bound bus. HRTC officials confirmed that higher authorities have been informed, and discussions

with Punjab officials are ongoing. HRTC takes precautionary measures Deputy CM Agnihotri, who also holds the transport portfolio, emphasized that the safety of passengers and staff is the government's top priority. "HRTC buses operate on 600 routes in Punjab. Until we receive assurance from the Punjab government, we will not allow our buses to be parked overnight in Punjab. Some routes may also be suspended if needed," he said. He further stated that FIRs have been registered, and arrests are being made. The Himachal Pradesh DGP has spoken to his Punjab counterpart regarding the incidents. Growing tensions The attacks on HRTC buses follow a series of similar incidents. On Wednesday, HRTC suspended 10 routes in Punjab after the windshield of a Chan-

digarh-Hamirpur bus was broken near Kharar. Earlier, a Jalandhar-Manali bus was pelted with stones, and Bhindranwale posters were pasted on it. Another incident saw a bus conductor and driver being threatened when they resisted. Tensions between Punjab and Himachal escalated after an altercation at the Manikaran Barrier in Kullu district, where a special area fee was imposed on vehicles. In retaliation, Dal Khalsa and Sikh Youth of Punjab activists pasted Bhindranwale posters on HRTC buses. Meanwhile, Anti-Terrorist Front India's national president Viresh Shandilya condemned the incidents, calling them an attempt to disturb peace in Himachal. He announced plans to paste Bharat Mata's posters on Punjab Roadways buses in Shimla as a symbolic protest.

# Who was Jessica Aber?

## Ex-US Attorney Found Dead Two Months after her Resignation

Former U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia (EDVA), Jessica Aber, was found dead at her residence in Virginia on Saturday morning. The Alexandria Police Department (APD) confirmed the discovery and stated that an investigation is underway to determine the cause of her sudden demise. Authorities responded to a call at 9:18 AM at a residence in the 900 block of Beverley Drive, where Aber, 43, was found unresponsive. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of Virginia is set to conduct an autopsy to establish the cause and circumstances of her death, according to an APD statement. Who was Jessica Aber? Jessica Aber was a distinguished legal professional with a long history in public service. She began her career in the Eastern District of Virginia as an assistant U.S. attorney in 2009. From 2015 to 2016, she worked as counsel to the assistant attorney general in the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice (DOJ). She later served as the deputy chief of EDVA's criminal division before being nominated as U.S. Attorney by President Joe Biden in 2021. Her appoint-

ment was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Aber stepped down from her position two months ago, following a change in administration under President Donald Trump. Prior to her resignation, she told The Washington Post that she had traveled more than 50,000 miles across Virginia to engage with students and community leaders, underscoring her commitment to outreach and justice. Born in California in 1981, Aber earned her un-



dergraduate degree from the University of Richmond and later obtained her Juris Doctor (J.D.) from William & Mary Law School in 2006. Reaction from colleagues and officials The news of Aber's sudden death has shocked her colleagues and the legal community. Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares expressed his condolences in a statement on social media platform X, saying: "I am saddened to learn of the passing of Jessi-

ca Aber, whose career of public service included U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia and whose work with Ceasefire Virginia saved more lives than we may ever realize." Current U.S. Attorney for EDVA, Erik S. Siebert, described Aber as an irreplaceable leader, mentor, and prosecutor. "We remain in awe of how much she accomplished in her all-too-brief time in this world. Her professionalism, grace, and legal acumen set the standard," Siebert stated. "Though we are devastated by this loss, each of us in the Eastern District of Virginia will look to her example and endeavor to live up to that standard." Investigation into her death While no official cause of death has been determined yet, authorities have stated that they are investigating the incident thoroughly. The APD has not provided any details regarding potential foul play but assured that further updates will be released as the investigation progresses. Aber's passing has left a void in the legal community, with many remembering her as a dedicated public servant who tirelessly worked for justice.

# China's Military Drills Near Taiwan

## Is This Strategic Posturing?

China's recent military exercises near Taiwan, conducted between March 16 and 17, 2025, have once again raised serious concerns about stability in the Taiwan Strait. The large-scale deployment of warships, fighter jets, drones, and strategic bombers marked one of the most aggressive displays of force by Beijing in recent years. While China insists that these drills were a necessary response to foreign interference, they also serve as a clear demonstration of its military capabilities and strategic intent. The question remains—are these exercises merely strategic posturing, or do they signal a dangerous escalation toward conflict? Beijing's Calculated Show of Force The scope of China's military operations over these two days was extensive. Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence reported that 59 Chinese aircraft, including J-10 and J-16 fighter jets, conducted operations near the island. Of these, 42 crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, a previously respected boundary that acted as a buffer between Taiwan and mainland China. Additionally, at least 90 Chinese warships were reportedly active in the surrounding waters, engaging in joint air-sea combat drills. China's Eastern Theatre Command described the exercises as a way to test "joint operational capabilities under real combat conditions." However, given the scale of the incursions, it is difficult to see them as anything other than an attempt to intimidate Taiwan. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) appears to be

rehearsing potential future scenarios, such as a blockade or even an invasion of Taiwan. The US and Taiwan Partnership Beijing claims that the exercises were provoked by statements from both the US and Taiwan, which it views as threats to its sovereignty. Recent adjustments in the US State Department's official language removed references to Taiwan being part of China, a shift that Beijing interpreted as a significant policy change. Furthermore, Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te has reaffirmed his government's commitment to strengthening Taiwan's self-defence, further aggravating tensions. Taiwan has been steadily increasing its defence capabilities in response to Beijing's growing aggression. In 2025, Taiwan's military budget reached 2.45% of its GDP, with significant investments in missile defence systems, naval fleets, and air force capabilities. Additionally, Taiwan has been developing asymmetric warfare strategies, focusing on mobile missile units, sea mines, and drone technology to counter potential Chinese aggression. The US, which has legal obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act to assist in Taiwan's self-defence, strongly criticised China's military actions. The State Department labelled the drills "irresponsible and escalatory," reinforcing Washington's support for Taiwan. In recent years, US-Taiwan military cooperation has deepened, with increasing arms sales, intelligence-sharing, and joint training programs. This growing partnership has been

a major point of contention between Beijing and Washington. Regional and Global Implications China's aggressive military drills near Taiwan have sent ripples across the Indo-Pacific. Japan, which sees Taiwan's security as crucial to its own national interests, expressed concern over Beijing's assertiveness. Meanwhile, Australia and South Korea urged all parties to exercise restraint to prevent unintended military confrontations. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) also voiced alarm, as many of its member states fear that escalating tensions could spill over into broader regional conflicts. These developments have led several countries to reassess their own security strategies. Many regional players are considering stronger defence partnerships with the US and its allies, further complicating China's strategic calculus. Beijing's actions may, in fact, be counterproductive, pushing neighbouring nations to seek greater military cooperation with Washington rather than deterring them. While China's military drills serve strategic purposes, they also play a crucial role in domestic politics. President Xi Jinping has repeatedly framed Taiwan's reunification as a historical mission, using nationalist rhetoric to solidify public support. By taking an aggressive stance, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) seeks to reinforce its nationalist credentials and project strength to its domestic audience. However, this approach comes with risks. If Beijing continues escalating



military pressure, it could accelerate Taiwan's push toward formal independence and provoke stronger responses from the US and its allies. The Risks of Miscalculation China's military exercises near Taiwan underscore the fragile balance of power in the region. While Beijing aims to send a strong message, such aggressive manoeuvres also increase the risk of accidental conflict. A miscalculation by any side—whether it be China, Taiwan, or the US—could lead to an unintended escalation, with potentially catastrophic consequences. As tensions rise, diplomatic engagement and crisis management mechanisms become increasingly vital. While China may seek to pressure Taiwan into submission through military intimidation, its actions may ultimately have the opposite effect, strengthening Taiwan's resolve and drawing the US and its allies deeper into the conflict. The Taiwan Strait remains one of the most volatile flashpoints in global geopolitics, and how these tensions are managed in the coming years will shape the future of regional stability.

# US Lifts \$10 Million Bounty on Sirajuddin Haqqani

## Move follows the return of an American citizen held captive for two years

**THE POINT DESK** The recent decision by the United States to quietly lift its \$10 million bounty on Sirajuddin Haqqani, the Taliban's interior minister and a key figure in the Haqqani network, has sparked debates on whether this is a calculated diplomatic move or a dangerous compromise. The move, which also includes the removal of bounties on Abdul Aziz Haqqani and Yahya Haqqani, follows the release of an American citizen held captive for two years—a development that raises serious questions about Washington's evolving stance on the Taliban. For decades, the Haqqani network has been one of the most feared militant factions, known for orchestrating deadly attacks, including bombings on the US and Indian embassies in Afghanistan. The group was responsible for a series of kidnappings and extortion activities, all while being

labeled a terrorist organization. Sirajuddin Haqqani himself admitted to planning the 2008 Kabul Serena Hotel attack, which claimed six lives, including that of an American citizen. Yet, in 2025, he finds himself walking a path of international rehabilitation, with the US signaling a thaw in relations. Taliban officials have hailed this as a step toward normalization. Foreign Ministry official Zakir Jalaly framed the decision as a sign that Afghanistan and the US are moving "beyond the effects of the wartime phase." But this raises concerns: Does this move truly indicate a shift toward constructive diplomacy, or is it merely a transactional compromise in exchange for an American hostage? From a strategic standpoint, Washington's decision is not without precedent. Over the years, US administrations have engaged in back-channel

negotiations with the Taliban, recognizing their de facto control over Afghanistan. China and Qatar have already accepted Taliban representatives in various diplomatic capacities. Yet, the Taliban's governance remains under scrutiny, particularly due to its harsh policies against women and girls, which have drawn global condemnation. Moreover, Sirajuddin Haqqani is no ordinary Taliban figure. Unlike the reclusive supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada—who faces potential prosecution by the International Criminal Court for gender-based persecution—Haqqani has attempted to position himself as a more pragmatic leader. He has, at times, spoken out against the Taliban's rigid authoritarianism and internal decision-making. Could this be a sign that certain factions within the Taliban are seeking legitimacy on the global stage?

For the US, the risk is clear. By easing pressure on the Haqqanis, Washington may be attempting to open diplomatic channels with a faction of the Taliban that could offer more flexibility. However, this move could also embolden militant networks, setting a precedent that groups with a history of terrorism can eventually be legitimized if they wait long enough. Ultimately, whether this is a masterstroke of realpolitik or a dangerous gamble remains to be seen. If this is a first step toward meaningful engagement and reforms, the US may be charting a new course for Afghanistan. But if it is merely a one-time concession to secure a hostage's return, it risks eroding the very credibility of counterterrorism policies that once made Haqqani one of America's most wanted men.



- Court can reject the report and order further investigation if needed.
- Allegations against Aditya Thackeray remain under scrutiny.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The recent closure report filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in the death cases of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput and his former manager Disha Salian has stirred fresh controversy, with legal representatives arguing that the accused have not been cleared.

Speaking to IANS, Advo-

# Accused Not Cleared: Disha Salian's Father's Lawyer on Sushant Case Closure Report

cate Nilesh C Ojha, representing Disha Salian's father, stated that the closure report does not necessarily mean the case is shut. He emphasized that courts have the power to reject such reports and direct further investigations if deemed necessary.

"Even after the submission of a closure report, the accused are not automatically freed. Courts can reopen the case, demand additional evidence, and even issue arrest warrants, as seen in past cases like the Aarushi Talwar murder," Ojha said.

He further pointed out that no official statement from the CBI has been released regarding the report's findings. Citing legal precedents, Ojha

highlighted instances where closure reports were rejected, leading to fresh charge sheets and renewed probes.

Ojha also dismissed allegations of political interference, asserting that the case is about justice for Disha Salian and Sushant Singh Rajput rather than political agendas. He revealed that Disha's father had filed a PIL in September 2023, following which the Maharashtra government formed a Special Investigation Team (SIT) in December. However, despite a formal complaint being lodged in January 2024, no case was registered. The lawyer raised critical unanswered questions, including suspicions about Aditya Thackeray's possible involvement, discrepancies in post-mortem findings, and alleged threats to witnesses. He argued that these gaps indicate possible manipulation in the



investigation.

Sushant Singh Rajput, popularly known as SSR, was found dead at his Bandra residence

on June 14, 2020, sparking national outrage. His postmortem, conducted at Mumbai's Cooper Hospital, cited asphyxia

as the cause of death. However, questions regarding the probe's transparency continue to persist.

## Leaders Pay Tributes to Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev on Shahid Diwas

- PM Modi, Amit Shah, and Rahul Gandhi paid homage to the martyrs.
- Shahid Diwas marks the sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev on March 23.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

On the occasion of Shahid Diwas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, and senior Congress leaders paid homage to freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev, remembering their supreme sacrifice for India's independence.

Prime Minister Modi, in a message on X, honored their legacy, stating, "Today, our nation remembers the supreme sacrifice of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev. Their fearless pursuit of freedom and justice continues to inspire us all."



Home Minister Amit Shah also paid his respects, calling their sacrifice a testament to patriotism. "These great revolutionaries proved through their lives that there is no greater duty than patriotism. Their

sacrifice ignited the nationwide freedom movement and will continue to inspire generations," he wrote on X.

Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, joined in paying tribute. Rahul Gandhi, in his post, highlighted Bhagat Singh's fight against social injustice, stating, "His struggle was not just against British rule but also against casteism and social discrimination. His thoughts on equality and brotherhood will always inspire us."

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge shared a quote reflecting the revolutionary spirit of the martyrs and called their thoughts "immortal," reaffirming their contribution to India's freedom struggle.

Shahid Diwas is observed every year on March 23 to honor the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev, who were executed by the British in 1931.

## Jama Masjid Sadar chief Zafar Ali Arrested in Sambhal violence case

TPN Correspondent | Sambhal

Jama Masjid Sadar chief Zafar Ali has been taken into custody by the Uttar Pradesh Police in connection with the violence that erupted in Sambhal on November 24, 2024.

A special investigation team (SIT) interrogated him on Sunday regarding the clashes that broke out during the Archaeological Survey of India's (ASI) examination of the Shahi Jama Masjid.

While being escorted by the police, Zafar Ali told reporters, "I did not incite any violence." His brother, advocate Mohammad Tahir, claimed that the Jama Masjid Sadar chief "will be arrested soon."

The SIT has already filed a chargesheet spanning over 4,000 pages in six of the 12 cases related to the violence, which resulted in the deaths of four individuals and injuries to several others, including security personnel and locals. Zafar Ali, along with his son, had been summoned to the Sambhal Police Station for questioning.

**Tight security measures in place**

Anticipating potential tensions, the police have deployed heavy security across the city, including personnel from the

Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) and Rapid Response Force (RRF). A flag march was conducted to maintain law and order. Last week, officials and residents celebrated Holi peacefully, with the Friday namaz at the Jama Masjid proceeding without incident. To prevent vandalism, a tarpaulin sheet was placed over the mosque, and the structure was whitewashed as per court orders.

**Background of the Sambhal violence**

The violence on November 24, 2024, was triggered by a court-ordered ASI survey of the historic Shahi Jama Masjid, following claims that the mosque was built over the remains of a demolished Hindu temple. The situation escalated into violent clashes, marked by stone-pelting, gunfire, and the torching of vehicles.

The unrest led to the deaths of four people and injuries to over 30, including several security personnel. Authorities imposed Section 144 to control the situation, and additional forces were deployed to restore order.

Following the violence, the Uttar Pradesh government set up a judicial commission to investigate the incident.

## "Suspected" Arambai Tenggol Members Attack

Meitei Insurgents Who Signed Ceasefire: Manipur Police



TPN Correspondent | Imphal

Four members of the United National Liberation Front (Pambei), or UNLF (P), who had signed a ceasefire with the Centre and the Manipur government in November 2023, were injured in an attack by 15-20 suspected members of the Arambai Tenggol (AT), police said on Sunday.

The incident occurred on Saturday when the alleged AT members arrived at the residence of UNLF (P) functionary Irengbam Nandakumar Singh alias Tonsana, 56. A confrontation ensued, leading to injuries for four UNLF (P) cadres. Manipur Police, in a post on X, stated that security forces responded immediately, detained the injured, and shifted them to a

hospital. "They are reported to be free from any danger and have only blunt injuries (not gunshot)," the statement added.

Following the attack, security forces raided AT Unit-17 under Imphal East district's Porompat police station and recovered various items, including 15 grams of a substance suspected to be heroin and an INSAS assault rifle bayonet.

An AT delegation had met Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on February 25, seeking assurances for civilian safety following the surrender of arms. They requested that central forces and the police ensure security to prevent civilians from rearming themselves.

**Ongoing ethnic conflict**

The violence in Manipur, ongoing since May 2023, has largely involved the valley-dominant Meitei community and the Kuki tribes, who are concentrated in the hill districts. Kuki civil society groups have accused AT of attacking their villages, prompting the formation of village defense forces. AT, however, claims it was forced to take up arms as "village volunteers" due to inadequate law enforcement.

In September 2024, Manipur Police confirmed the involvement of overground insurgents from both communities in the ongoing conflict. Several Meitei militant groups, including PLA, KYKL, and KCP, reportedly returned from Myanmar after the military junta's influence weakened in certain areas. Meanwhile, nearly two dozen Kuki and Zomi insurgent groups under the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) and the United People's Front (UPF) operate under a controversial suspension of operations (SoO) agreement, which mandates they stay in designated camps with weapons locked under supervision.

Manipur violence has so far claimed over 250 lives and displaced nearly 50,000 people.

## Rajeev Chandrasekhar To Take Over As Kerala BJP President

TPN Correspondent | Thiruvananthapuram

Former Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar is poised to take over as the Kerala BJP state president, with party sources confirming that he is the sole nominee for the post. A formal announcement is expected following the party's state council meeting on Monday, where BJP's central observer Prahlad Joshi is set to officially declare his appointment.

On Sunday, Chandrasekhar filed two sets of nomination papers at the BJP headquarters in Thiruvananthapuram, in the presence of outgoing state president K Surendran and senior BJP leaders Kummanam Rajasekharan, V Muraleedharan, PK Krishnadas, and MT Ramesh, along with Union Ministers Suresh Gopi and George Kurian.

At 60, Chandrasekhar brings over two decades of political experience, having served as Union Minister of State for Electronics and IT, Skill Development, and Jal Shakti. A three-term Rajya Sabha MP from Karnataka, he has also been the BJP's national spokesperson and vice-chairman of the NDA's Kerala unit.

Chandrasekhar contested the 2024 Lok Sabha elections



from Thiruvananthapuram as the NDA candidate, narrowly losing to Congress leader Shashi Tharoor by 16,077 votes. Born to Keralite parents in Ahmedabad, he has strong family ties to Thrissur.

The leadership change comes as K Surendran completes his five-year term. Speculation about his continuation was dismissed after he stated in a TV interview that he had informed the central leadership of his decision to step down.

While other BJP state leaders, including Shobha Surendran and MT Ramesh, were considered strong contenders

for the post, party members welcomed Chandrasekhar's appointment.

Shobha Surendran expressed confidence in his leadership, calling it a "unanimous decision" that will help strengthen the party. MT Ramesh praised Chandrasekhar's strong electoral performance in Thiruvananthapuram, emphasizing his growing support base. Union Minister of State Suresh Gopi described Chandrasekhar as a "catalyst" for the BJP's organizational expansion in Kerala, stating that a strong team of ministers and senior leaders would back his efforts.

# India Can Engage With Russia, Ukraine, Israel, Iran Parallelly

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Saturday emphasized that India's foreign policy follows the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas,' allowing the country to engage simultaneously with conflicting nations like Russia and Ukraine, as well as Israel and Iran.

Speaking at the Business Today Vucanomics 2025 event on 'Diplomacy in the Age of Disrup-

tions,' Jaishankar highlighted India's strategic approach in maintaining relations with diverse global players. "In the current polarized era, India is among the few that can simultaneously engage with Russia and Ukraine, Israel and Iran, the democratic West and the Global South, and the BRICS and QUAD," he said.

**Expanding Global Cooperation**

Jaishankar stated that India has actively participated

in over 40 international groupings focused on trade, technology, energy, and security. "We have shown the ability to forge different combinations for different domains, ensuring as many doors remain open as possible," he added.

He also underlined the role of Indian diplomacy in securing defense and security partnerships that offer the armed forces and businesses a wide range of options.

The minister stressed that

India's foreign policy is designed to protect economic interests while navigating global challenges. He highlighted the role of Indian embassies in promoting commercial ties, concessional financing for businesses abroad, and facilitating talent mobility.

"Our diplomacy and businesses must continue working together as Team India in the quest for a Viksit Bharat and in promoting India's interests globally," he posted on X. Jaishankar also pointed to tourism and connectivity initiatives as economic drivers, reinforcing India's efforts to enhance its global footprint while strengthening domestic development.



## Pope Francis Leaves Hospital After Five-Week Stay

**TPN Correspondent | Vatican City**

Pope Francis was discharged from Rome's Gemelli hospital on Sunday after a five-week stay for pneumonia, marking his first public appearance since February 14. The 88-year-old pontiff, who had been battling a severe respiratory infection, was seen waving to well-wishers from a hospital balcony just moments before leaving in a car escorted by police vehicles.

The pope's hospitalization on February 14 was considered the most serious health crisis of his 12-year papacy. Doctors had been closely monitoring his condition, and although he has now been released, they have advised two more months of rest at the Vatican for a full recovery.

Despite his frail condition, Pope Francis made a brief but significant appearance outside the hospital, where he smiled and waved at the gathered crowd. Sitting in his wheelchair, he looked visibly weak, with a swollen face and a feeble voice, but managed



to express gratitude to one of the well-wishers who had brought him yellow flowers.

During his stay, the Vatican released only one public image of the pope, showing him praying in the hospital's chapel, which fueled concerns about his health. On Sunday, as he emerged for a short moment, hundreds of supporters outside the hospital chanted his name in an emotional display of support.

While the pope is now back at the Vatican, his recovery process remains ongoing, and doctors have urged caution in his schedule. His public engagements are expected to be limited in the coming weeks as he regains strength.

## Mark Carney to Contest in Nepean as Liberals Revoke Arya's Candidacy

**TPN Correspondent | Ottawa**

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney will contest his first federal election in 2025 from the Nepean constituency in Ontario, replacing incumbent MP Chandra Arya, whose candidacy was revoked by the Liberal Party. The unexpected decision comes as Canada prepares for a snap election on April 28, nearly six months ahead of schedule.

The ruling Liberal Party announced on Saturday that Carney will run for Nepean, a suburban riding in Ottawa. The party highlighted Carney's deep ties to the capital, stating, "Ottawa is where he raised his family, devoted his career to public service, and always gave back to his community."

Arya, who has represented Nepean since 2015, was informed on Thursday that his candidacy for the 2025 election was revoked due to unspecified "new information" reviewed by the party's Na-



tional Campaign Co-Chair. No further details were provided.

**Carney Calls Snap Election**

Carney, who replaced Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister on March 14, is set to meet Governor General Mary Simon on Sunday to dissolve the House of Commons. The move is seen as an effort to capitalize on the Liberal Party's recent momentum and avoid a

looming no-confidence vote in Parliament. At an event in Edmonton, Carney justified the early election, saying, "In this time of crisis, the Government needs a strong and clear mandate." He is expected to launch his campaign in Atlantic Canada before touring other provinces.

**Controversy Over Arya's Removal**

The sudden cancellation of Arya's candidacy raises questions about the internal decisions of the Liberal Party. Arya, who was also barred from the party's leadership race in January, has previously criticized the legitimacy of the process.

With Carney yet to face Parliament, this election will be his first major test as Prime Minister.



## Indian-Origin Man and Daughter Shot Dead in Virginia Store; Suspect Arrested

**TPN Correspondent | Virginia**

An Indian-origin man and his daughter were shot dead at a convenience store in Accomack County, Virginia, on Thursday, sending shockwaves through the Indian community in the region. The police have arrested 44-year-old George Frazier Devon White in connection with the shooting.

Pradipkumar Patel (56) and his daughter were working at a relative's store on Lankford Highway when the shooting occurred. According to authorities, the county sheriff's office received a distress call about the incident at around 5:30 AM

on March 20. Upon arrival, officers found Patel unresponsive with gunshot wounds, while his daughter was also discovered shot inside the building.

Patel was pronounced dead at the scene, while his daughter was rushed to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, where she later succumbed to her injuries. Sheriff W. Todd Wesells confirmed the arrest of George Frazier Devon White from Onancock, who is currently held without bond. The accused faces multiple charges, including first-degree murder, attempted first-degree murder, possession of a firearm by a felon, and two counts of using

a firearm in the commission of a felony. Authorities have not yet disclosed a motive behind the shooting. Authorities have not yet disclosed a motive behind the shooting.

Paresh Patel, the store owner and a relative of the victims, expressed his grief in an interview with Virginia's local WAYV-TV channel.

"My cousin's wife and her dad were working this morning, and some guy just came in and shot them," he said. "I don't know what to do."

The tragic incident has left the Indian community in Virginia in mourning, as investigations continue.

## Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu Jailed Pending Trial

### Main opposition leader of Erdogan faces corruption charges

**TPN Correspondent | Istanbul**

Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, a key political rival and main opposition leader against Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, was jailed pending trial on Sunday as part of a corruption investigation. The court's decision, which also saw at least 20 others detained, has sparked widespread criticism from opposition leaders and European officials, with many calling it a politically motivated move.

The charges against Imamoglu, 54, come amid rising tensions ahead of Turkey's next general elections. While no national elections are scheduled until 2028, Imamoglu has been considered a strong contender against Erdogan, even leading in some polls. His arrest has intensified political unrest, with thousands of protesters rallying against the government's actions in Istanbul, Ankara, and other cities. Authorities have responded with heavy police presence, tear gas, and water cannons to disperse demonstrators.

Despite facing corruption and terror-related allega-



tions, Imamoglu has denied all charges, calling them "unimaginable accusations and slanders." The court, however, chose to release him under judicial control for the separate terror-related case, a move that prevents the government from appointing a trustee to take over Istanbul's administration.

Opposition leaders, including Ankara Mayor Mansur Yavas of the Republican People's Party (CHP), have condemned the arrest as a "disgrace for the judicial system." The CHP is

currently voting to select Imamoglu as its candidate for the next presidential election, signaling continued resistance to Erdogan's rule.

The Turkish government has denied any political interference, insisting the judiciary remains independent. However, with a nationwide protest ban extended for four more days and over 320 demonstrators already detained, tensions between Erdogan's administration and the opposition are escalating rapidly.

# Stock Markets Poised for Gains as FIIs Return

Indian stock markets are likely to see an improved performance this week, as there are no immediate negative signals from international markets. Additionally, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) have resumed inflows into the Indian markets, further strengthening investor sentiment.

The Nifty 50, which closed at 23,350 last Friday, faces immediate resistance at 23,800. However, experts suggest that consolidation at the current level is crucial for sustained growth. Once the index stabilizes, it could gain further strength, boosting investor confidence.

Last week, smallcap and midcap indices struggled, while stocks from the realty, healthcare, PSE, energy, pharma, banking, auto, infrastructure, and finance sectors saw gains.



## Stock Recommendations

### TVS Motors

TVS Motors has been in a downtrend since September last year, correcting nearly 25%. However, it formed a double bottom at the crucial ₹2,230 level, indicating a potential turnaround. The stock gained in five consecutive sessions last week, closing at ₹2,413 on Friday. Investors should consider entering at ₹2,400, targeting ₹2,550–2,600, with a stop loss at ₹2,360.



### Mankind Pharma

After a 30% correction from its lifetime high, Mankind Pharma is showing strong momentum. The stock surged 12% in the last two sessions with high volumes, and the pharma sector as a whole is performing well. Mankind Pharma closed at ₹2,415 last Friday.



day, and investors should consider entering at ₹2,350, aiming for a target of ₹2,540 with a stop loss at ₹2,310.

### SBI Life

SBI Life, which has been in a downtrend since September, has shown accumulation since the beginning of this year. Despite market fluctuations, the stock displayed resilience, gaining nearly 12% last week. It has now reached a key resistance level at ₹1,550. If it breaks this level, further upside is expected. Investors should enter at ₹1,520, targeting ₹1,660–1,690, with a stop loss at ₹1,480.



### MRPL

MRPL shares have been in a downtrend since February last year, but recent trading patterns indicate range expansion with high volume. The stock outperformed the Nifty, rising 13%

last week and 22% over the past month. It closed at ₹135 on Friday with a 14% gain. Investors should enter in the ₹130 range, targeting ₹165, with a stop loss at ₹120.



### NHPC

NHPC has been forming a solid base for the past two months, showing a Darvas Box pattern. The stock has reached short-term resistance at ₹82, and a breakout could increase momentum. NHPC rose 6% last week. Investors should enter at ₹80, targeting ₹115, with a stop loss at ₹76. Market experts suggest that while the outlook is positive, investors should follow stop-loss levels and monitor global cues closely.



# Boeing lays off 180 employees in India amid global workforce reduction

US aerospace giant Boeing has laid off up to 180 employees from its engineering and technology center in Bengaluru as part of a broader global workforce reduction. The move comes as the company navigates ongoing challenges while maintaining its focus on customer service, safety, and quality.

According to sources, the layoffs were part of strategic adjustments, affecting only limited positions without impacting key operations or government contracts. While some roles have been eliminated, Boeing has also created new positions, indicating a restructuring rather than an outright downsizing of its India workforce. Boeing employs around 7,000 people in India and had earlier announced plans to reduce its global workforce by approximately 10% last year.



However, the company has not issued an official statement regarding the latest layoffs in Bengaluru.

Boeing wins major US Air Force contract  
Meanwhile, Boeing secured a significant contract to build the next-generation fighter jet for the US Air Force, marking a major victory for the

aerospace firm. The contract, part of the Next Generation Air Dominance (NGAD) program, will see Boeing replacing Lockheed Martin's F-22 Raptor with a new crewed aircraft designed to operate alongside drones.

US President Donald Trump, who awarded the contract, named the new aircraft the F-47 but did not disclose the total value of the deal. The announcement led to a 5% surge in Boeing's stock, while Lockheed Martin shares dropped nearly 7%. Trump hinted at potential international sales, stating, "Our allies are calling constantly. They want to buy them also." For Boeing, this contract represents a crucial turnaround, offering a boost to its St. Louis, Missouri, fighter jet production unit at a time when the company has faced struggles in both its commercial and defense segments.

# India to Drive 6% of Global Trade Growth, Ranks Third After US and China



India is set to play a significant role in global trade over the next five years, contributing around 6% to worldwide trade growth, following China at 12% and the United States at 10%, according to a joint report by DHL and the New York University Stern School of Business.

The latest DHL Trade Atlas 2025 projects that India will maintain its third-place position in trade expansion while improving its trade speed ranking by 15 places to reach the 17th spot. India's compound annual trade volume growth rate is expected to rise from 5.2% to 7.2% over the next five years. The report highlights that in 2024, India ranked as the 13th largest participant in international trade, yet its trade volume saw a 5.2% annual growth rate from 2019 to 2024, significantly outpacing the global trade growth rate of 2%. The surge in India's trade reflects its rapid macroeconomic growth and increasing integration into the global trade network.

"The Trade Atlas underlines India's rapid expansion in global trade, positioning the country as a critical hub connecting the East and West. While we anticipate trade volume growth and an increase in global trade share, we remain cautiously optimistic given the global economy's volatility," said R S Subramanian, SVP South Asia, DHL Express.

The report further notes that while China is perceived as a more trade-oriented economy, India's goods trade-to-GDP ratio in 2023 was nearly as high as China's. When accounting for both goods and services, India's trade intensity even exceeded that of China.

Strong foreign investments are expected to bolster India's trade growth. In 2023, India ranked second globally after the US in attracting greenfield foreign direct investment. The manufacturing sector, in particular, has emerged as the primary focus of this investment.

The report also predicts robust trade growth for other emerging Asian economies, including Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines. South Asia and Southeast Asia are expected to outperform other regions in terms of trade expansion.

"With the ongoing diversification of supply chains, Asia has firmly positioned itself as a dominant force in global trade," said Ken Lee, CEO - Asia Pacific, DHL Express.

# UPI Services to Be Deactivated for Inactive Mobile Numbers from April 1

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has directed banks and payment service providers to remove UPI IDs linked to inactive mobile numbers starting April 1. Users with such numbers will lose access to payment apps like Google Pay, Paytm, and PhonePe due to security concerns.

NPCI stated that inactive mobile numbers linked to UPI pose a security risk, as reassigned numbers may still be connected to previous UPI accounts. This could lead to fraudulent activities if the numbers are misused. To prevent this, NPCI has asked banks and digital payment platforms to delink inactive numbers from the UPI system.

## Who Will Lose UPI Access?

- Users who have changed or deactivated their mobile numbers



without updating them in their bank records.

- Those whose mobile numbers have been reassigned to another person.
- Customers with inactive or deactivated numbers that have not been used for banking transactions.

## How to Avoid UPI Disruptions?

- Ensure that the mobile number linked to the bank account remains active.
- If a mobile number has changed, update the new number with the bank before April 1.
- Users with inactive numbers should get a new number and update it in their bank records to avoid service disruption.

## Role of Banks in the Process

- Banks and PSPs will regularly re-

view and remove UPI IDs linked to inactive or reassigned numbers.

- Telecom providers' Mobile Number Revocation List will be used to identify numbers flagged as inactive or deactivated.
- Banks will notify users before disabling UPI services for inactive numbers.
- UPI access will not be removed for users who update their mobile numbers before the deadline.

With this move, NPCI aims to enhance security in digital transactions and prevent potential fraud linked to reassigned mobile numbers. Users are advised to verify and update their mobile numbers to ensure uninterrupted access to UPI services.

## NewJeans vs ADOR Court halts K-pop group’s independent activities



South Korean girl group NewJeans has been barred from conducting independent activities following a legal dispute with their agency, ADOR, a subsidiary of HYBE Corporation. The Seoul Central District Court issued the directive on Friday, ruling in favor of ADOR’s injunction against the group. The conflict began last November when NewJeans—comprising Minji, Hanni, Danielle, Haerin, and Hyein—announced their decision to cut ties with ADOR, citing mistreatment and dissatisfaction with the agency’s management. The group even attempted to rebrand itself as NJZ. Tensions escalated when the members openly opposed the removal of former ADOR CEO Min Hee Jin, fur-

ther straining their relationship with the label. In January, ADOR filed an injunction against NewJeans, arguing that the group was seeking independent contracts without approval. The court sided with ADOR, stating that NewJeans’ actions could “seriously damage” the label’s reputation. The ruling also emphasized that the group failed to provide sufficient proof that ADOR had violated their contractual obligations, noting that the agency had fulfilled its financial commitments. “If (NewJeans) unilaterally terminate the contract, ADOR would suffer greatly. And if (NewJeans) begins activity under a new name, it could severely damage not only the brand of NewJeans but the reputation of

ADOR,” the court stated. The ruling casts uncertainty over NewJeans’ scheduled song release on March 23. The group, while respecting the court’s decision, expressed dissatisfaction with the legal proceedings. In a statement, they said, “We plan to challenge today’s decision during which we will raise additional legal issues and submit further supporting evidence. Regardless, we can no longer remain with a management that has disrespected our identities and undermined our achievements.” Beyond contractual disputes, NewJeans has also accused ADOR of violating artists’ rights and workplace harassment, adding another layer of complexity to the legal battle.

## Honor Pad X9a Launched With 11.5-inch LCD, Snapdragon 685 SoC

Honor has unveiled the Honor Pad X9a in Malaysia, featuring an 11.5-inch LCD display with a 120Hz refresh rate and Snapdragon 685 chipset. The new tablet runs on Android 15-based MagicOS 9.0 and comes with an 8,300mAh battery, supported by a 35W fast charger. The device is listed on Honor Malaysia’s website, but the company has yet to announce its price. It will be available in a single Gray color variant and comes in an 8GB RAM + 128GB storage configuration. Honor Pad X9a Specifications The Honor Pad X9a sports a 2.5K (1,504x2,508 pixels) LCD screen, paired with 8GB of RAM. The company also offers virtual RAM expansion, allowing an addi-



tional 8GB of unused storage to be used as memory. In terms of cameras, the tablet features an 8-megapixel rear camera with autofocus and an f/2.0 aperture, while the front 5-megapixel camera handles selfies and video calls. For connectivity, the tablet supports Wi-Fi and Bluetooth 5.1, and is com-

patible with Honor’s wireless keyboards and stylus. It is equipped with a quad-speaker setup for an enhanced multimedia experience. The 8,300mAh battery provides up to 70 days of standby time, according to the company. The tablet measures 267.3 x 167 x 6.77mm and weighs 475g.

## Meta Weighs UK Subscription Option After Targeted Ads Ban



Meta is considering introducing a subscription model for UK users of Facebook and Instagram after agreeing to stop targeting human rights campaigner Tanya O’Carroll with personalised ads. The move follows a legal challenge that led to the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) affirming that users have the right to object to their data being used for direct marketing. Legal Battle Over Targeted Ads The case began when O’Carroll sued Facebook over its collection and use of her personal data for

targeted advertising. The ICO backed her claim, stating that Meta was “processing Ms O’Carroll’s personal data for direct marketing purposes.” Under UK GDPR regulations, individuals have the “absolute right” to object to such processing. Meta settled the case by agreeing to stop processing O’Carroll’s data for direct marketing, effectively blocking targeted ads for her. In response, O’Carroll called it a “victory” for UK and EU citizens, saying it could help others object to surveillance advertising.

While Meta stated it was “pleased to draw a line under this long-running case,” it fundamentally disagreed with the claims. A company spokesperson reiterated that Facebook and Instagram remain free because of personalised advertising and emphasized the company’s compliance with UK GDPR obligations. Following the settlement, Meta revealed that it is “exploring the option of offering people based in the UK a subscription” similar to the ad-free plan it already provides in the EU. The company said it would share further details in due course.

ICO’s Stand on User Privacy The ICO reiterated that organisations must respect people’s choices regarding their data and provide a clear opt-out mechanism for direct marketing. The regulator encouraged users to file complaints if they believe companies are not complying with their requests. As Meta faces increasing regulatory scrutiny, its potential shift to a paid subscription model in the UK could mark a significant change in how social media platforms operate in the region.

## From Delhi to Hyderabad, India goes dark for Earth Hour

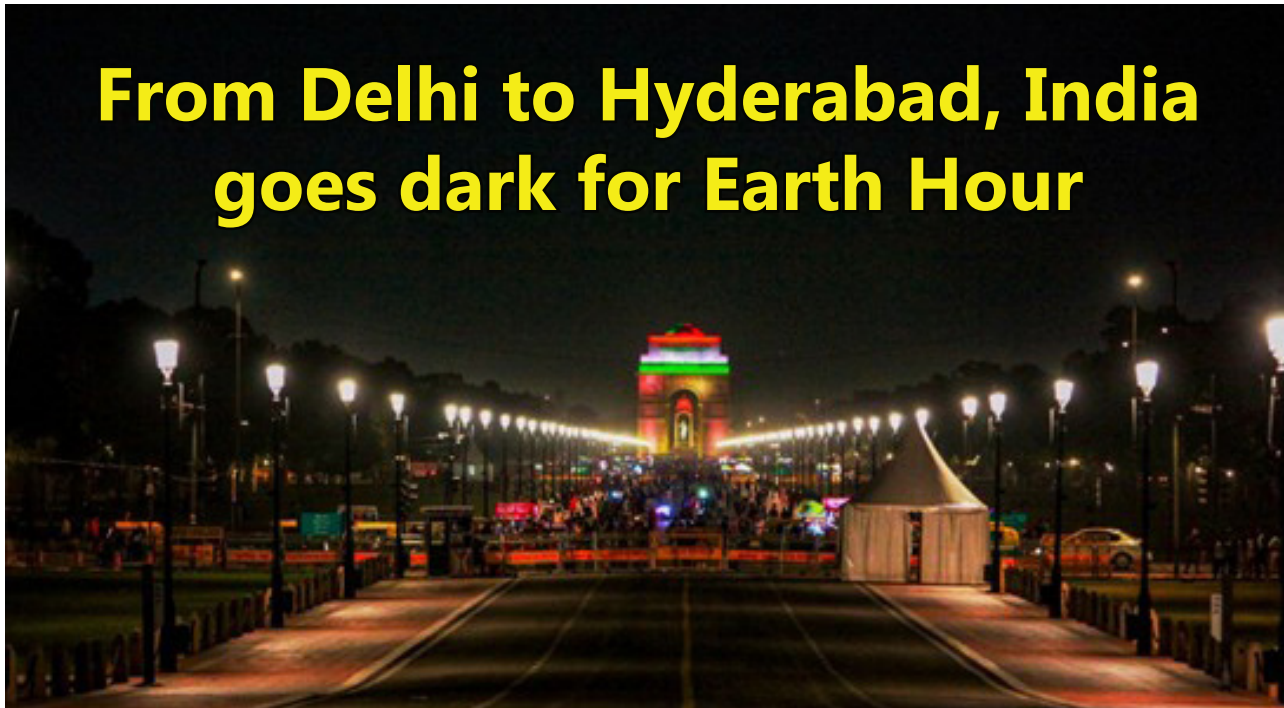


Photo Credit: PTI

Cities across India observed Earth Hour on Saturday night by switching off lights between 8:30 pm and 9:30 pm as part of the global movement to conserve energy. The event, organized by the World Wide Fund (WWF), saw several iconic buildings and landmarks participating across the country. In Delhi, the lights at the India Gate and Qutub Minar were turned off in solidarity with the initiative. The Delhi electricity distribution company, BSES, had urged its 50 lakh-plus consumers and 2 crore residents in South, West, East, and Central Delhi to switch off non-essential lights and appliances during the hour-long observance. Hyderabad also joined the ini-

tiative, with the Dr BR Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat going dark in support of Earth Hour. Similarly, the Kerala Assembly Building switched off its lights, reinforcing the nationwide commitment to sustainability. Earth Hour was first introduced as a lights-out event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007, and has since expanded to over 190 countries, engaging millions of individuals and organizations worldwide. The Ministry of Environment highlighted that major global landmarks, including the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, Sydney Opera House, and Empire State Building, have all participated in this global initiative over the years. This year, Earth Hour coincided with World Water Day,

with WWF-India promoting the theme “Be Water Wise” to emphasize the link between energy conservation and water security. As climate change continues to impact global water resources, the need for sustainable practices has become increasingly urgent. Last year, Delhi residents saved 206 MW of electricity during Earth Hour, with BSES areas contributing 130 MW. This year, the initiative aimed to surpass those figures, reinforcing Delhi’s role as a leader in the fight against climate change. Earth Hour is more than just a symbolic gesture—it serves as a reminder to adopt conscious choices every day that contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future.

## Kerala Farmer’s Tiny Goat Karumbi Enters Guinness Records

A Kerala farmer’s pet goat, Karumbi, has made history by securing a place in the Guinness Book of World Records as the shortest living goat in the world. Owned by Peter Lenu, Karumbi, a black female pygmy goat, stands at just 1 ft 3 in (40.50 cm) at the full-grown age of four, setting a new global benchmark. Peter Lenu, who had always known Karumbi was unusually small, was encouraged by those around him to submit her for the world record. After receiving a suggestion from a guest, he took the necessary steps to

get the goat evaluated. A veterinarian confirmed Karumbi’s size, age, and health, clearing her for the record title. Karumbi belongs to the Canadian pygmy goat species, known for their stocky bodies and genetic dwarfism, which limits their leg growth to a maximum of 21 in (53 cm). Despite her tiny stature, Karumbi is one of the most social animals on the farm, living alongside three male goats, nine females, and ten kids, as well as cows, rabbits, hens, and ducks.

Adding to the excitement, Karumbi is currently pregnant, and her next offspring could potentially break new records. Thrilled by Karumbi’s recognition, Peter Lenu expressed his commitment to maintaining the genetic quality of his animals and ensuring their well-being. He eagerly awaits the birth of Karumbi’s baby, which could further cement the farm’s place in history.



Image Credit: Guinness World Records

## CSK Triumphs Over Mumbai Indians in IPL 2025



In a thrilling start to the IPL 2025 season, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) defeated Mumbai Indians (MI) by four wickets at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on March 23. Opting to field first, CSK's bowlers restricted MI to 155/9 in 20 overs. Debutant spinner Noor Ahmad impressed with figures of 4/30, including the pivotal wicket of Suryakumar Yadav, who scored 29 off 26 balls.

In response, CSK's chase was anchored by captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, who smashed a rapid 53 off 26 deliveries, reaching his half-century in just 22 balls. Rachin Ravindra contributed significantly with an unbeaten 65 off 45 balls, sealing the victory with a six. Despite a late wobble, CSK achieved the target in 19.1 overs, finishing at 158/6.

This win provides CSK with a positive start to their campaign, showcasing both bowling depth and batting prowess.

## Germany Eyes NL Semis as Italy Seeks Comeback in Dortmund



Germany is looking to maintain its momentum from Euro 2024 as they face Italy in the Nations League quarter-final second leg in Dortmund. After a 2-1 comeback victory in Milan, goalkeeper Oliver Baumann expressed confidence that the team would ride the "surge in spirit" that has uplifted them in recent months. Speaking at the pre-match press conference, Baumann emphasized the home advantage of Dortmund's 82,000-strong Westfalenstadion, which could prove challenging for Italy. "It can be very loud, and it can carry a team. It can be extremely unpleasant for an opposing team," he said.

Germany's campaign has revived local enthusiasm after disappointing early exits in recent major tournaments. Coach Julian Nagelsmann echoed this sentiment, stating that the team aims to "make our own history" rather than dwell on past encounters, including Italy's 2006 World Cup semi-final victory at the same venue.

Italy, on the other hand, is determined to turn the tie around. Coach Luciano Spalletti acknowledged the first-leg defeat but urged his team to focus on the present. "We need to do something new. We expect a strong opponent, but we know what we need to do to return home with a win," he said.



## Ishan Kishan's Explosive Century Powers SRH to Victory

In a stunning display of batting prowess, Ishan Kishan scored a rapid century to lead Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) to a commanding victory over Rajasthan Royals (RR) in their IPL 2025 opener at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad. Kishan, acquired by SRH for ₹11.25 crore during the mega auction, made an immediate impact in his debut match. He reached his century in just 45 balls—the fastest in IPL 2025—finishing unbeaten on 106 off 47 deliveries.

This explosive knock was supported by valuable contributions from Travis Head (67 off 31 balls), Heinrich Klaasen (34 off 14 balls), and Abhishek Sharma (24 off 11 balls). Their collective efforts propelled SRH to a total of 286/6 in 20 overs, narrowly missing their own record of 287 runs.

In response, RR's chase faltered under pressure, and SRH secured a decisive win. This match not only highlighted Kishan's explosive batting but also underscored SRH's dominance in the IPL.



## Yuki Bhambri Becomes India's No. 1 Men's Doubles Player

Ends Rohan Bopanna's 286-week reign after Miami Open victory

Indian tennis star Yuki Bhambri has claimed the country's top spot in men's doubles rankings after defeating veteran Rohan Bopanna at the Miami Open. Bhambri, alongside his Portugal partner Nuno Borges, secured a hard-fought victory over Bopanna and Croatia's Ivan Dodig in the round of 32 match, winning 6-4, 3-6, 10-7.

With this win, the 32-year-old Bhambri is set to overtake Bopanna in the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) doubles rankings at the conclusion of the Miami Open. Bhambri now stands at number 29 in the live ATP doubles rankings, while Bopanna has dropped to 43. The Indo-Portugal duo will next face Adam Pavlasek of Czechia and Jamie Murray of the United Kingdom in the round of 16.

Bopanna, a two-time Grand Slam champion and a winner of 26 tour-level titles, had been India's number-one doubles player since October 2019. His reign, lasting 286 weeks, has now come to an end. The 45-year-old had entered the Miami Open as the defending champion, having won the ti-



tle with Matthew Ebden last year. Bhambri has been in impressive form this season, recently clinching his maiden ATP 500 title at the Dubai Tennis Championships alongside Australia's Alexei Popyrin. The duo staged a remarkable comeback in the final, defeating US Open

and Australian Open champions Harri Heliövaara and Henry Patten 3-6, 7-6(12), 10-8. Last month, Bhambri and Ivan also caused an upset by knocking out top-seeded Marcelo Arevalo and Mate Pavić at the Qatar Open. The 2009 Australian Open junior boys' champion, Bhambri was previous-

ly India's top-ranked singles player, breaking into the top 100 twice with a career-best ranking of 83 in April 2018. He shifted his focus to doubles in 2023 and has since won three ATP 250 titles, further cementing his position as one of India's top tennis players.

## Irfan Pathan Dropped from IPL 2025 Commentary Panel

Former Indian cricketer Irfan Pathan has been excluded from the commentary panel for the upcoming IPL 2025 season, reportedly due to accusations of bias and targeting certain players in his analysis.

Pathan, a regular in both English and Hindi commentary for IPL and India's international matches post-retirement, was not named by the broadcasters for the 2025 season. According to a report in the Times of India, the decision was influenced by complaints

from players and concerns over his social media activity, where he was accused of taking "potshots" at certain cricketers. A source close to the development stated, "Pathan had a fallout with a couple of players a few years ago. Since then, he has not shied away from referring to them aggressively. The matter was raised that other junior players got caught in the crossfire. He has been accused of taking potshots at them on social media platforms even if he didn't name them."

Following his exclusion, Pathan has reportedly launched his own YouTube channel, where he is expected to share his views on cricket.

**Not the First High-Profile Exclusion**

Pathan is not the first commentator to be sidelined due to controversial remarks. In 2020, former cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar was removed from the BCCI's commentary panel for India's ODI series against South Africa, following his infamous 'bits and pieces'

remark on Ravindra Jadeja during the 2019 ODI World Cup. At the time, Manjrekar had acknowledged the decision, stating, "I have always considered commentary a great privilege, but never an entitlement. It is up to my employers whether they choose to have me or not & I will always respect that."

With Pathan now out of IPL 2025 commentary, it remains to be seen if he will make a return in future seasons.





The anticipation for Sambaraala Yetigattu, starring Mega Supreme Hero Sai Durgha Tej, continues to grow. Following SDT's intense first look and the teaser's gripping action sequences, the makers have now introduced another pivotal character from the film. On the occasion of Srikanth's birthday, the team revealed his striking transformation as "Britishhu." Sitting atop a hill, clutching a thread, his intense gaze and rugged demeanor

set the tone for a powerful character. With a thick beard, unkempt long hair, a soldier's outfit, and sturdy boots, Srikanth's look exudes dominance and mystery. Directed by Rohith KP and produced by K Niranjan Reddy and Chaitanya Reddy, Sambaraala Yetigattu is shaping up to be a high-octane period action spectacle. The film is currently in production and is slated for a grand Pan-India release on September 25th.



Ever since the intense teaser of Kingdom dropped in February, excitement has been soaring for this Vijay Deverakonda-led action drama. The gripping visuals hinted at a mysterious, high-stakes backdrop, and speculation has been rife that director Gowtam Tinnanuri's period narrative delves into the Sri Lankan civil war. Adding fuel to these rumors, Vijay Deverakonda is now headed to Sri

Lanka for the next schedule of Kingdom. Over the next five days, the team will be shooting a song across multiple picturesque locations, further strengthening the buzz that the film is rooted in the island nation's tumultuous past. Reports suggest that Vijay plays a rebel who stands against the oppressive actions of the Sri Lankan army, fighting to protect his people. While it remains to be seen if

the film directly references the LTTE conflict, all eyes are on Kingdom as it gears up for a grand release on May 30th. The film stars Mr. Bachchan actress Bhagyashri Borse as the female lead and is bankrolled by Naga Vamsi under the Sithara Entertainments banner. With a massive pan-India rollout planned, Kingdom is shaping up to be one of the summer's biggest cinematic spectacles.

## Robinhood Trailer Blend of Comedy and Action

With just five days left for its theatrical release, the much-anticipated trailer of Robinhood has finally been unveiled, heightening excitement among fans. The film marks the reunion of Nithiin and director Venky Kudumula after their blockbuster Bheeshma, and is backed by Mythri Movie Makers. Nithiin plays a burglar who unexpectedly finds himself working for a security agency led by Rajendra Prasad. His team, consisting of elderly members, is assigned to protect a wealthy young woman, played by Sreeleela, who arrives from Australia. However, the plot takes a sharp turn when a ruthless villain, portrayed by Devdatta Nage, steps in with his illegal operations. The trailer showcases a perfect blend of comedy, action, and adventure, with Nithiin impressing in multiple avatars, effortlessly delivering humor and charm. His chemistry with Sreeleela adds a lighthearted touch, while Rajendra Prasad and Vennela Kishore contribute hilarious moments. Devdatta Nage's villainous presence intensifies the narrative, and David Warner's stylish cameo adds an extra layer of excitement. Visually, Sai Sriram's cinematography enhances the film's appeal, while GV Prakash Kumar's energetic music complements the high entertainment factor. With top-notch production values from Mythri Movie Makers, Robinhood promises to be a fun-filled entertainer with a gripping storyline. Releasing worldwide on March 28, Robinhood is shaping up to be a crowd-puller, offering an exciting mix of humor, action, and adventure.

### Warner makes his cinema debut with Robinhood

Australian cricketer David Warner has arrived in Hyderabad ahead of the grand trailer launch and pre-release event of his debut Telugu film, Robinhood. Warner, who enjoys a massive fan base in India, was welcomed with a huge bouquet and greeted by excited supporters seeking autographs. Directed by Venky Kudumula, Robinhood features Nithiin in the lead role. Warner has expressed his enthusiasm for his first acting experience, stating that he thoroughly enjoyed shooting for the film. Last week, the film's production house, Mythri Movie Makers, introduced Warner's entry into Indian cinema with a social media post. "After shining and leaving a mark on the ground, it is time for him to shine on the silver screen. Introducing the widely loved @davidwarner31 to Indian Cinema with #Robinhood in an exciting cameo. Grand release worldwide on March 28th," they wrote on X (formerly Twitter). Warner also shared his excitement, posting, "Indian Cinema, here I come. Excited to be a part of #Robinhood. Thoroughly enjoyed shooting for this one. Grand release worldwide on March 28th."



## Raashi Khanna Flaunts Post-Workout Glow!

Tollywood star Raashi Khanna is giving major fitness goals as she shared a post-workout snap with her trainer, Kuldeep Sethi, revealing the dedication behind her sculpted physique. Dressed in a chic brown bralette, matching gym pants, and trendy sneakers, Raashi looked effortlessly radiant, proving that hard work and style go hand in hand. Adding a dash of humor to her fitness journey, she captioned the picture, "Proof that I made it through the session without tears and still felt cute enough for a selfie! @kuldepsethi." Meanwhile, on the professional front, Raashi is gearing up to share the screen with Siddhu Jonnalagadda in her upcoming film Telusu Kada.



## Amanda Seyfried Calls Jennifer's Body "Perfect"

Amanda Seyfried has praised her 2009 film Jennifer's Body, calling it a "perfect" movie while criticizing its marketing for cheapening its impact. Directed by Karyn Kusama and written by Diablo Cody, the horror-comedy starred Seyfried alongside Megan Fox. Though it failed at the box office, it later developed a strong cult following. Seyfried, in an interview with GQ, expressed her admiration for the film, highlighting its bold storytelling and unique tone. "I can't critique this movie. To me, it's perfect. It's got guts. Diablo Cody was outspoken, brilliant, and hilarious. We were expressing a certain angst in a very specific, comedic way within a distinct genre. The special effects were incredible, there were stunts—everything you could want. If there's anything to criticize, it's the marketing," she said. The film follows Fox's character, a high school girl possessed by a demon who preys on male classmates. Seyfried played her best friend, Needy Lesnicki, who ultimately tries to stop her. According to Seyfried, the marketing campaign misrepresented the movie, portraying it as a standard horror flick rather than the sharp, feminist satire it was intended to be. "The marketing team cheapened it, making it seem like just a gory romp. I think they ruined it. Karyn and Diablo were an amazing team. I loved playing Needy—it was my first time embracing a nerdy character, glasses and all. Megan got to transform into a demon—it was awesome. We had so much fun, and I'd love to celebrate it with a sequel," she added. Up next, Seyfried will star in Paul Feig's psychological thriller The Housemaid.

