

ARN No: T/TG/2024/1040

Vol.I ISSUE 49

*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

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

Shivakumar denies BJP's Constitution amendment claim.

Challenges BJP to provide solid proof.

Congress leadership reviews and clears remarks.

Labels BJP's allegations as political diversion.

Calls for CBI probe on phone tapping.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has dismissed BJP's allegations that he proposed amending the Constitution for religion-based reservations. Refuting the claims, he stated that he would retire from politics if proven otherwise. Accusing the BJP of spreading misinformation, Shivakumar said the opposition was unable to accept his political stance. He emphasized that the Congress leadership had reviewed his statements and confirmed that he had not made any unconstitutional remarks. "Am I mad to say something like that? BJP leaders are twisting my words. Where have I spoken about changing the Constitution? It is their own party members who have made such remarks," he said. Challenging the BJP to provide evidence, Shivakumar declared, "I am ready to retire from politics if I ever spoke about amending the



Constitution. Let them produce proof." The controversy arose after the BJP linked his statements to the Karnataka government's move to introduce a 4% reservation for Muslims in public contracts. However, Shivakumar clarified that his remarks were misinterpreted. He also revealed that the Congress high command had sought clarification on the issue. After reviewing video footage of his statements, they

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Dy CM DK Shivakumar Challenges BJP, Denies Constitution Remarks

SC Dismisses Plea for CBI Probe into Honeytrap Case



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Supreme Court has dismissed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking a CBI probe into an alleged honey-trap attempt involving a minister and multiple politicians in Karnataka. The plea, filed by social activist Binay Kumar Singh, also sought court monitoring of the investigation or a probe led by a committee of retired judges. A three-judge bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sanjay Karol, and Sandeep Mehta rejected the plea, stating that the matter did not warrant a Supreme Court intervention. Advocate Barun Kumar Sinha, representing the petitioner, argued that the media reports on honey-trapping allegations required an impartial investigation. The PIL emphasized that the honey-trapping of judges posed a serious threat to judicial independence and the rule of law. It referenced a statement made in the Karnataka Assembly on March 21, 2025, where a sitting minister alleged

SC rejects plea for CBI inquiry

Petition sought judiciary-monitored probe

Minister Rajanna's allegations caused stir

that a person aspiring to be Chief Minister had used honey traps to target judges and politicians. Cooperation Minister K N Rajanna had earlier claimed in the Assembly on March 20 that at least 48 politicians from various parties had fallen victim to honey-trap schemes. He also alleged that a network distributing CDs and pen drives with compromising content was active across India, trapping even Union Ministers. Following these explosive revelations, the opposition demanded a judicial inquiry led by a sitting High Court judge, while Home Minister G Parameshwara ordered a high-level probe. However, Rajanna later clarified that he had referred to the honey-trapping of politicians and not judges, as the PIL suggested. With the Supreme Court refusing to intervene, the Karnataka government is now expected to proceed with its own investigation into the case.

Jay Bhattacharya confirmed as NIH Director by US Senate

Confirmed as NIH Director with a 53-47 Senate vote.

Co-authored Great Barrington Declaration against lockdowns.

NIH cut 1,000 staff, froze grants before his appointment.

Trump & RFK Jr. support him to restore NIH research.



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
The US Senate has confirmed Dr. Jay Bhattacharya, an Indian-American professor of health policy at Stanford University, as the new Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He was confirmed with a 53-47 vote in the 119th Congress' first session. Bhattacharya, a health economist, was nominated by former US President Donald Trump in November. He is expected to work alongside US Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. to reshape the NIH and restore it as a "gold standard" institution for medical research. A prominent researcher, Bhattacharya co-authored the 'Great Barrington Declaration' in 2020, which opposed strict lockdowns and advocated for focused protection strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. He has an extensive background in health

policy, biomedical innovation, and the economic impact of government health programs. During his confirmation hearing, Bhattacharya assured that he had no immediate plans to cut additional NIH staff, although he acknowledged that the decision might not be solely his. His appointment comes after the NIH implemented significant workforce reductions, freezing grant activities and capping research funding for universities. US Senator Mitch McConnell from Kentucky congratulated Bhattacharya, stating that his leadership would bring stability and expertise to the NIH. Trump, in his nomination statement, expressed confidence that Bhattacharya and RFK Jr. would collaborate to address America's major health challenges and "Make America Healthy Again."

UPI Transactions Faced Disruptions Across India



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Over 3,000 complaints on Downtetector since 6 PM.

Users reported stuck transactions on Google Pay, Paytm, and others.

Some faced money deductions without confirmation from recipients.

TPN Correspondent | India
Thousands of UPI users across India faced disruptions in digital transactions on Wednesday evening, with many reporting failed or delayed payments on platforms like Google Pay and Paytm. According to Downtetector, a website that tracks online service outages, over 3,000 complaints

were registered since 6 PM, indicating a widespread technical issue affecting multiple banks and payment gateways. Users took to social media to express frustration over incomplete transactions, stuck payments, and instances where money was debited from their accounts without confirmation on the recipient's end.

BY Vijayendra to Continue as BJP Karnataka State President

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The BJP high command has put an end to speculation regarding the party's leadership in Karnataka, deciding to continue BY Vijayendra as the state BJP president. Despite opposition from dissident leaders, including Basangouda Patil Yatnal, the central leadership chose to retain Vijayendra, reinforcing the party's stance on discipline. As part of this decision, the BJP has expelled Yatnal for six years due to his repeated anti-party activities. Despite receiving two show-cause notices from the disciplinary committee, Yatnal continued to defy party directives. The final notice issued on February 10 sought a response within 72 hours, but the central

committee found his explanation unsatisfactory, leading to his expulsion. Vijayendra, son of former CM B.S. Yediyurappa, reacted to the development, stating that discipline and dedication are the pillars of the BJP. He emphasized his commitment to leading the party with unity and trust while working towards strengthening the BJP in Karnataka. He also reiterated his focus on ousting the Congress government, accusing it of corruption and nepotism. With Yatnal's expulsion, the BJP high command has sent a strong warning to other rebel leaders, ensuring that internal factionalism does not disrupt the party's stability ahead of upcoming elections.



Karnataka Govt Plans Power Generation by Gram Panchayats

- Solar micro-grids under PPP model proposed
- Aim to reduce Gram Panchayat electricity costs
- Pilot project to begin with Ges-com

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
The Karnataka government is exploring a plan to enable Gram Panchayats (GPs) to generate their electricity through public-private partnership (PPP) models, aiming to reduce the financial burden caused by power bills. Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Minister Priyank Kharge recently held discussions with Additional Chief Secretary Anjum Parwez and officials from the Gulbarga Electricity Supply Company Ltd (Gescom) to assess the feasibility of this initiative. Karnataka has 5,949 Gram Panchayats, many of which struggle with high electricity dues. “This initiative aims to empower local governing bodies by enhancing energy self-sufficiency and promoting sustainable development,” Kharge stated on X. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, in his 2025-26 Budget, had announced the establishment of solar micro-grids under the PPP model to address the electricity cost burden on panchayats. Government data reveals that various departments owe Rs 8,690.19 crore to electricity supply compa-



nies (Escoms), with the RDPR Department alone accounting for Rs 4,547.8 crore of the dues. To tackle this issue, Kharge emphasized utilizing unproductive government lands for renewable energy projects. The minister highlighted that 2.8-3 acres of land could generate one MW of power, which could be used to run Panchayat offices, streetlights, and rural water supply pump sets. The department currently consumes 3,500 MW of power, equivalent to lighting up a million homes, with pump sets being the major electricity consumers. A pilot project will be launched under Gescom before expanding it statewide, ensuring that Gram Panchayats move towards zero electricity billing and sustainable power generation.

Rajanna’s Honeytrap Allegation to be Investigated

- Minister Rajanna alleges honeytrap attempts
- Government to examine petition legally
- Opposition demands judicial inquiry

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara has assured that the state government will examine Cooperation Minister K N Rajanna’s petition regarding alleged honeytrap attempts within the framework of law and take appropriate action. On Tuesday, Rajanna submitted a formal petition to Parameshwara, seeking a thorough probe and legal action. Addressing reporters in Gokarna, the Home Minister clarified, “He has submitted a petition, not a complaint, as I am not a police station. We will examine it judiciously and take further action.” Last Thursday, Rajanna caused a major stir in the Karnataka Assembly by revealing that he was targeted in a honeytrap attempt. He further claimed that at least 48 politicians across different parties had fallen victim to similar tactics. His statement created a storm in political circles, forcing the government to take immediate notice. Following the Assembly debate, the Home Minister announced a high-level investiga-

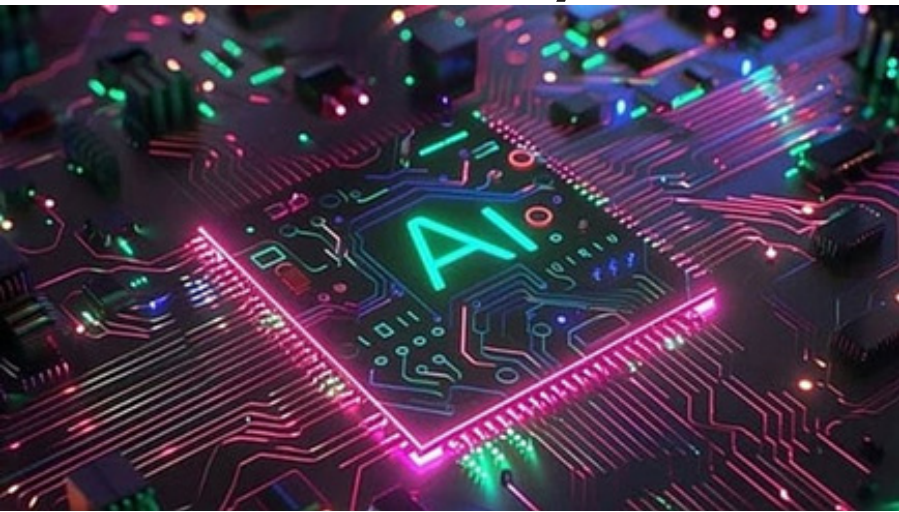


tion into the honeytrap allegations. However, the opposition has been pressing for a judicial inquiry led by a sitting High Court judge, arguing that a more transparent probe is necessary given the seriousness of the claims. Parameshwara stated that the final decision on the investigation will be made only after consulting the legal team and discussing the matter with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. The government is treading cautiously as the issue has political and legal ramifications. With the controversy gaining momentum, the political landscape in Karnataka remains tense, awaiting further clarity on the scope of the investigation and potential political fallout.

Karnataka Govt to Introduce AI-Powered Selfie-Based Attendance System

- AI-enabled attendance for government employees
- Geofenced system prevents manipulation
- Pilot run successfully in health department

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
The Karnataka government is set to implement the Karnataka Advanced Attendance Management System (KAAMS), an AI and GIS-enabled attendance system for all its departments. This initiative aims to replace traditional biometric and ledger-based attendance methods with a real-time, selfie-based verification system. Employees will have to download the KAAMS mobile application and register using their Aadhaar details. To mark attendance, they must take a selfie within their office premises, which will be verified using AI tools. The system is geofenced, ensuring employees cannot manipulate attendance by marking it from outside their designated workplaces. With over five lakh employees across 70 government departments, Karnataka’s current biometric system has been prone to manipulation, as staff could damage equipment or use other tactics to hide irregular attendance. The Centre for e-Governance, under the Department for Personnel and Administrative Reforms (DPAR), developed KAAMS to counter such issues. Principal Secretary Pankaj Kumar Pandey (DPAR



- e-Governance) emphasized that this system ensures real-time attendance tracking with no scope for tampering. A successful pilot was conducted in government hospitals and primary health centers, where it helped address absenteeism among doctors. Project Director of the AI Cell, Shreevyas HM, explained that KAAMS verifies attendance by comparing daily selfies with the employee’s Aadhaar photo. The system alerts department heads about frequent late arrivals or early departures. However, officials assured that employee movement would not be tracked, and all data would remain with the state government, not private agencies. The new attendance system is expected to enhance transparency and discipline in government offices, making Karnataka the first state in the country to introduce such an advanced mechanism.

489 Cases Booked in a Week for Traffic Violations in Mangaluru Special Drive

TPN Correspondent | Mangaluru
The Mangaluru City Police have registered 489 cases against buses for various traffic violations under the Indian Motor Vehicles (IMV) Act during a special drive conducted last week. So far in 2025, a total of 1,527 cases have been booked under the Act. Commissioner of Police Anupam Agrawal stated that continuous awareness programs have been conducted to educate the public, students, bus drivers, and auto-rickshaw operators on traffic rules to prevent road accidents and maintain discipline. Additionally, private bus owners have been called for meetings to reinforce adherence to regulations. Despite these measures, several violations were recorded during the special drive. The highest number of cases were for carrying excess passengers (234), followed by footboard traveling (71), using shrill horns (62), obstructing traffic (59), violating lane discipline (20), not issuing tickets (18), and reckless driving (14). The Commissioner warned that violations will be booked under Section 281 of the BNS Act, with FIRs submitted to the court. He



urged private bus drivers, conductors, and owners to prioritize road safety and follow lane discipline. From January to March 2025, the police have filed 643 cases for carrying excess passengers, 316 for obstructing traffic, 163 for shrill horns, 138 for footboard travel, and 68 each for not issuing tickets and violating lane discipline. Additional cases include reckless driving (30), driving without uniform (25), and violating no-entry/one-way rules (24). The Mangaluru Police have assured continued enforcement to improve road safety and prevent traffic violations in the city.

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Dy CM DK Shivakumar Challenges BJP, Denies Constitution Remarks

confirmed he had not made any unconstitutional remarks. “They watched the video and were assured. If I had said anything wrong, I would have admitted it,” he stated. Addressing BJP’s protests, including waving black flags at his events, Shivakumar remarked, “They are obsessed with me. Let them continue.” Labeling BJP’s allegations as a political diversion, he urged the media to watch his full interview rather

than rely on BJP’s claims. Regarding allegations of phone tapping raised by BJP and JD(S) leaders, Shivakumar pointed to past instances and urged the Centre to release the CBI probe report before making new accusations. He also expressed confidence that Home Minister G. Parameshwara would conduct a fair probe into the alleged honeytrap case involving Minister K.N. Rajanna.

UPI Transactions Faced Disruptions Across India

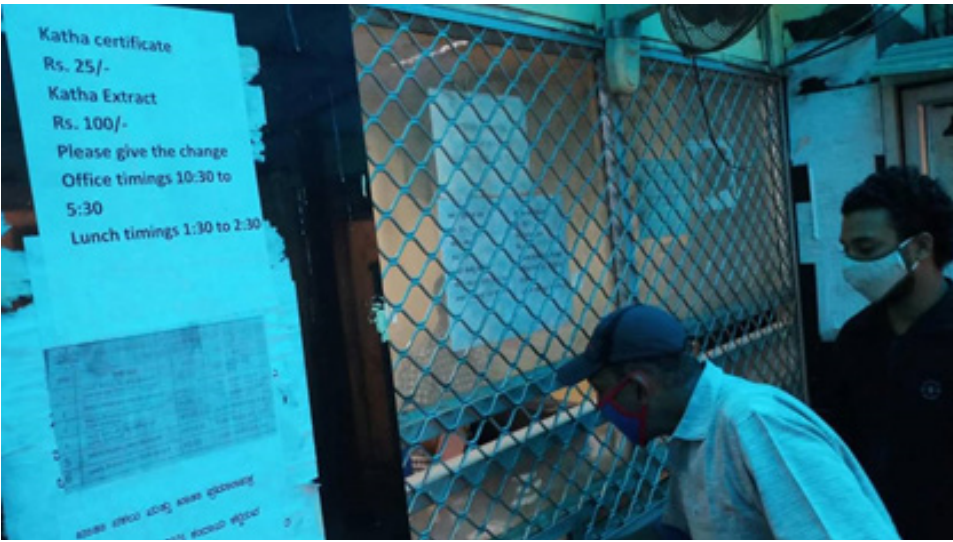
“I tried making a payment at a grocery store using UPI, but it kept failing. Even switching between Google Pay and Paytm didn’t help,” posted a user on X (formerly Twitter), echoing the concerns of many others. Many customers have tagged

their banks and digital payment platforms, seeking an immediate resolution to the issue. So far, no official statement has been released by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) or major payment service providers.

MLA Vedavyas Kamath Urges Government to Resolve E-Khata Issues

- E-Khata registration faces technical challenges
- Public struggles with property transactions
- MLA demands trial implementation before full rollout

TPN Correspondent | Mangaluru
Mangalore City South MLA D Vedavyasa Kamath has urged the state government to rectify technical issues in the e-Khata registration process, which has caused significant disruptions in sub-registrar offices. The sudden implementation of mandatory e-Khata registration without adequate preparation has forced citizens to visit offices repeatedly, delaying property transactions. Kamath highlighted that errors often occur during location capture via mobile devices due to network issues, and the system provides no option for rectification. The integration of e-Khata with the Kaveri software has



further complicated matters, preventing transactions such as the sale of undivided rights and family ownership transfers unless entire properties are re-registered. The system also obstructs agricultural land sales within city limits. Many citizens urgently require property documents for marriage, loans, and financial needs but are unable to obtain them due to these inefficiencies. Errors in road or ward numbers recorded by the system can create le-

gal complications in future property sales. Kamath also raised concerns about restricted public access to the Mangaluru MUDA office despite important work pending for legal professionals and citizens. He accused MUDA of corruption and pointed out vacancies in key positions such as Town Planning Members and Assistant Town Planners, affecting its efficiency. Additionally, he criticized the high cost of installing mandatory panic buttons in taxis, which are priced at ₹15,000 in Karnataka while available for ₹6,500 in Kerala. The transport department denies fitness certificates to taxis that fail to install the system, further burdening vehicle owners. Kamath vowed to take up these issues with the state government to seek immediate resolutions.



Chalavadi Narayanaswamy Attacks BK Hariprasad Over Political Relevance

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Senior BJP leader Chalavadi Narayanaswamy launched a scathing attack on Congress leader BK Hariprasad, claiming his political career has been built on favoritism rather than merit. He pointed out that despite Hariprasad's past role as Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council, he was not even considered for a ministerial post in Siddaramaiah's government.

In a tweet, Narayanaswamy sarcastically remarked that Hariprasad has enjoyed all powers in Congress through political "yoga" rather than competence. He accused the Congress party of rewarding loyalty over capability and stated that true merit never holds power within the party.

Taking a direct jibe, Narayanaswamy said that Hariprasad's influence has diminished over the years, and his attempts to remain politically relevant are evident in his

statements aimed at appeasing the high command. "Your political journey has thrived on nominations rather than public support. If you had true competence, you would have been given a ministerial position," he alleged.

Referring to past controversies, Narayanaswamy said Hariprasad's political struggles are now a desperate attempt to regain significance. He added that his own rise in politics was due to hard work, dedication, and capability, unlike Hariprasad, whom he accused of gaining power through the blessings of party leaders.

In a final remark, Narayanaswamy mockingly wished Hariprasad success in achieving his long-aspired ministerial position—whether through "yoga" or other means. He reiterated that his own political journey has always been a fight for the marginalized, contrasting it with Hariprasad's reliance on party favoritism.

MES Leader Shubham Shelke Arrested for Felicitating Marathi Youth in Belagavi

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES) leader Shubham Shelke was arrested in Miraj by Belagavi police for felicitating a Marathi youth involved in a language dispute. The arrest comes amidst



ongoing tensions between Kannada and Marathi speakers in the region.

The controversy began when Topanna Dukre, a Marathi youth, demanded that a Panchayat Development Officer (PDO) in Kiniye, near Belagavi, communicate with him in Marathi. When the officer continued speaking in Kannada, Dukre allegedly resorted to verbal abuse. Following the incident, a case was registered against Dukre, leading to his arrest and subsequent imprisonment.

Days after Dukre's arrest, Shelke, along with villagers from Kiniye, organized a felicitation event in his honor. The police, who had been monitoring Shelke's activities, launched a search operation and arrested him in Miraj. The arrest has sparked strong reactions, with

MES supporters condemning the action, while pro-Kannada groups have welcomed it.

Belagavi has long been a hotspot for language-related tensions, with MES actively advocating for the region's merger with Maharashtra. The latest development is expected to further intensify the political atmosphere, as similar incidents in the past have led to protests and counter-protests from both linguistic communities. Authorities have tightened security in sensitive areas to prevent any escalation of tensions. Police officials have urged the public to maintain peace and avoid actions that could disturb communal harmony. Further investigation into the case is underway, and officials have not ruled out additional arrests related to the incident.

BJP, JDS Allege ₹ 15,568 Crore Scam in Karnataka Smart Meter Procurement

- BJP, JDS demand cancellation of smart meter tender process
- Allegations of inflated costs and violations of procurement laws
- Opposition vows to continue protest against the government

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A major political controversy has erupted in Karnataka after opposition parties BJP and JDS alleged a ₹15,568 crore scam in the procurement of smart meters by the Energy Department. The leaders have demanded the immediate cancellation of the tender process, citing irregularities and inflated costs.

Addressing the media in Bengaluru on Tuesday, senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister C.N. Ashwath Narayan called it "daylight robbery." He accused the gov-

ernment of violating the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements (KTPP) Act and disregarding the Union Government's directives on smart meter procurement.

Ashwath Narayan stated that the initial project estimate provided by electricity supply companies (ESCOMs) was ₹571.52 crore, but the actual cost for ten years has ballooned to ₹21,400 crore. He pointed out that while the cost of a smart meter in other states like Himachal Pradesh and Telangana is around ₹7,740 for ten years (including ₹57 per month in main-



tenance charges), Karnataka's cost stands at ₹17,000 (including ₹71 per month in maintenance). JDS leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy echoed similar concerns, stating that the scam would put a massive financial burden on consumers. He alleged that in several states, smart meters are available for as low as ₹900, while Karnataka's costs range from ₹4,998 for

a single-phase meter to ₹28,000 for a three-phase meter. He also accused the government of awarding contracts to ineligible firms, including a blacklisted company from Uttar Pradesh.

Both BJP and JDS have vowed to continue their fight against the alleged scam, demanding a transparent retendering process and a thorough investigation.

MP Brijesh Chowta Urges Swift Approval for Coast Guard Academy in Mangaluru



TPN Correspondent | Mangaluru

Dakshina Kannada MP Capt Brijesh Chowta has urged the central government to expedite the final approval for the establishment of the Coast Guard Academy in Mangaluru. During a meeting with Defense Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh in New Delhi, Capt Chowta emphasized the national im-

portance of the project and requested swift administrative clearances.

The proposal for a world-class Coast Guard training institute was initially approved in 2017. The Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) has already allocated 159.03 acres of land in Kenjar, and the land transfer process has been completed. Addition-

- MP Capt Brijesh Chowta meets Defense Secretary in Delhi
- Seeks expedited approval for ₹1,385 crore Coast Guard Academy project
- Academy to enhance maritime security and economic growth

ally, a detailed project report has been submitted to the Ministry of Defense.

According to Capt Chowta, most of the necessary administrative approvals have been secured, with only the Cabinet Committee on Security's final clearance pending. He urged that this last approval be granted at the earliest to enable the implementation of the ₹1,385 crore project.

Following the meeting, Capt Chowta expressed optimism, stating that the Defense Secre-

tary responded positively to the request. He highlighted that establishing the Coast Guard Academy in Mangaluru would be a matter of great pride for India. The academy will train young recruits nationwide, reducing the need for advanced maritime rescue training programs abroad.

Capt Chowta also emphasized that the initiative would enhance coastal security in the Arabian Sea while contributing significantly to the economic development of the region.

BJP Issues Notices to Vijayendra, Yatnal Faction Leaders

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The BJP's central leadership has intensified efforts to address factionalism within the Karnataka unit by issuing show-cause notices to key leaders associated with the B.Y. Vijayendra and Basanagouda Patil Yatnal factions. The Central Disciplinary Committee has sent notices to three MLAs and two former ministers, demanding explanations within 72 hours.

Earlier, BJP had issued a notice to Vijayapura MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, who had responded after a visit to Delhi. Now, Yatnal's close associates, along with supporters of Kar-

nataka BJP President B.Y. Vijayendra, have received similar notices. Among those served notices are Yeshwanthpur MLA S.T. Somashekhar, Yellapur MLA Shivaram Hebbur, and Harihar MLA B.P. Harish. Additionally, former ministers M.P. Renukacharya and Katta Subrahmanya Naidu, both considered key figures in Vijayendra's camp, have been warned by the disciplinary committee.

The move follows increasing tensions within the Karnataka BJP, where the Yatnal faction has been pushing for a leadership change. Some leaders have openly criticized B.S. Yediyurappa and B.Y. Vijayendra, even lobbying in Delhi



for a new state president. However, a convention planned in support of Vijayendra was called off following Yediyurappa's intervention.

The BJP central unit is addressing factional disputes across various states, recently replacing the Kerala state pres-

ident and considering changes in West Bengal. With Karnataka now in focus, the response of the three MLAs and two former ministers to the disciplinary notice remains awaited. So far, none of the leaders have made a public statement regarding the notices.

Disqualification of 35 Vijayapura City Corporators Triggers Political Uproar

TPN Correspondent | Vijayapura

A major political crisis has erupted in Vijayapura following the disqualification of all 35 sitting corporators of the Vijayapura City Corporation. Belagavi Regional Commissioner Sanjay Shettennavar issued the disqualification order, citing their failure to submit asset declarations as per govern-

ment regulations.

The disqualified members include 17 from the BJP, 10 from Congress, one from JDS, two from AIMIM, and five Independents, all elected in 2022. However, they assumed office only in January 2024, and as per norms, they were required to declare their assets within a month of taking charge, which they failed to do.

The matter was brought to the Kalaburagi bench of the Karnataka High Court by former corporators Prakash Mirji (BJP) and Mainuddin Bilagi (Congress), who sought action against the non-compliant members. The court's directive resulted in the regional commissioner issuing the disqualification order.

Political uncertainty now



grips Vijayapura as the corporators, who were just beginning their five-year term, are left in limbo. Many have

expressed frustration, stating they were not officially notified about the disqualification. BJP corporator Shivarudra Bagalkot stated, "We only learned about it through the media. Without an official order, we cannot respond." Congress and Independent corporators echoed similar concerns.

Independent member Vimala Khane lamented that

the timing of the disqualification would disrupt ongoing developmental projects in the wards. She stated that her next course of action would depend on receiving an official order.

As the disqualified members weigh legal and political options, the city's governance faces uncertainty, and the state government may soon have to intervene to resolve the crisis.

Two Bengaluru Police Officials Arrested for Cyber Fraud Case

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Lokayukta police have arrested an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) and an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) in Bengaluru for allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs two lakh to investigate a cyber fraud case. The arrests were made based on a complaint filed by a 42-year-old software engineer on Tuesday night. According to the Lokayukta police, ACP Tanveer S R and ASI Krishna Murthy, both stationed at the Cyber, Economic, and Narcotics Police Station in the North East Di-

vision, had demanded Rs four lakh from the complainant to arrest the accused persons involved in the cyber fraud and initiate a proper investigation. Upon receiving the complaint, the Lokayukta police laid a trap and caught the ASI red-handed while accepting Rs two lakh as an advance payment.

Following his disclosure, the ACP was also taken into custody. This incident highlights the growing concerns over corruption within law enforcement agencies, especially in cases involving cybercrime, which have been on the rise in recent

years. The Lokayukta police are continuing their investigation into the matter and are expected to take further action.

In separate incidents, the Lokayukta police also arrested four other government officials in three different corruption cases across Karnataka. In Ram nagara district, G Muniraju, a Panchayat Development Officer from Soumedyappanahalli village, was arrested for accepting a bribe in exchange for sanctioning material supply bills under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGN-

REGA) program. Meanwhile, in Chitradurga, Naveen A M, a supervisor at the Hosadurga branch of the District Credit Cooperative Bank, was caught accepting a bribe of Rs 15,000 to approve loans for farmers. The arrest was made based on a complaint filed by Kumar P, the Executive Officer of the Primary Agriculture Credit Cooperative Society in Madadadhakere, Hosadurga. Additionally, two officials from the Forest Department in Belagavi were arrested for corruption. Mohammed Saab Moosamiya and Vinayak Patil, both posted at



Ramdurg, were caught accepting a bribe of Rs 7,000 to avoid legal action under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

The complaint was filed by an individual whose relatives were facing charges under the Act. The Lokayukta police have

reiterated their commitment to cracking down on corruption and ensuring accountability within government institutions. Further investigations are underway to uncover any additional irregularities linked to these cases.



Chicken, Mutton Prices Expected to Rise During Festivals

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

With the arrival of Ugadi on March 30 and Eid expected on March 31 or April 1, the prices of chicken and mutton in Bengaluru are set to increase, according to meat vendors and market analysts. As festival demand surges, chicken prices are expected to rise by Rs 10 to Rs 15 per kilo, while mutton could see an increase of nearly Rs 50 per kilo. Currently, skinless chicken is being sold between Rs 200 and Rs 220 per kilo, while mutton has been priced at Rs 800 to Rs 850 per kilo over the past week. Vendors predict that these prices could climb further in the coming days. Shahbaz, a meat vendor from Cox Town market, said that mutton prices may reach Rs 900 per kilo due to increased demand.

He also highlighted the impact of bird flu cases reported last month in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, which led to a decline in chicken sales, prompting many consumers to shift to mutton instead. "Mutton prices in central Bengaluru are already between Rs 800 and Rs 850 per kilo. However, in areas like Electronics City, Bellandur, and Marathahalli,

prices have already touched Rs 900 per kilo. Many vendors from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh purchase sheep from Karnataka, transport them to their states, and sell the meat for Rs 1,000 per kilo, making a significant profit," Shahbaz explained. A representative from a leading meat wholesale business reported a 10% drop in chicken sales, primarily due to concerns over bird flu. However, vendors believe that as the festival period nears, chicken demand will also see an uptick despite the recent decline. Meanwhile, a vendor from Russell Market stated, "I follow the prices listed in the newspaper and don't alter them based on festivals. If the standard market price changes, I make adjustments accordingly." Meat vendors at Cox Town, Johnson Market, and Russell Market expect the price surge to last for about a week before stabilizing. They reassured customers that the increase is temporary and prices are likely to return to normal after the festive period. Consumers are advised to plan their meat purchases accordingly, as fluctuations in supply and demand could further impact pricing in the days leading up to the festivals.

Cab Driver Kills Wife, Surrenders to Police

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A 39-year-old cab driver allegedly strangled his wife to death and later surrendered before a police station, confessing to his crime, police said on Wednesday. The accused, identified as Chandrashekhar, was taken into custody after police visited the crime scene. According to officials, his suspicion over his wife's character was the primary motive behind the murder. Police said his doubts intensified as she frequently engaged in long phone conversations, leading to repeated arguments and fights between the couple.

On Tuesday, a heated argument broke out between Chandrashekhar and his 35-year-old wife. In a fit of rage, he allegedly strangled her to death. After committing the crime, he im-



mediately went to the Sampigehalli police station and confessed. During interrogation, he told police that he suspected his wife of having an extramarital affair, a senior police officer stated. The couple had been married for about 12 years and had two young sons, a 10-year-old and a six-year-old. At the time of the incident, the

children were at school, police added.

Authorities have registered a case of murder and arrested the accused. The tragic incident has once again brought attention to the issue of domestic violence fueled by suspicion and lack of communication. Police officials emphasized the importance of seeking counseling

or legal help in troubled marriages rather than resorting to violence. Investigators are now gathering more evidence, speaking to neighbors, and checking call records to corroborate the claims made by the accused. Further legal proceedings are underway, and Chandrashekhar will be presented in court soon. The incident has left the local community shocked, with many calling for stronger awareness programs on handling domestic disputes peacefully. The police have urged individuals facing marital problems to seek professional assistance instead of resorting to extreme actions that can have irreversible consequences. The case highlights the need for societal intervention and mental health awareness to prevent such tragic incidents in the future.

BBMP Climate Change Cell Launches Internship Program

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Climate Action Cell has announced an internship program, inviting applications from students and young professionals with postgraduate degrees. This initiative aims to provide hands-on experience in climate-related projects at the ward level. In the first batch, the cell will engage 10 interns for a period ranging from two to six months. Selected candidates will receive a stipend of Rs 20,000 per month. The interns will work on various climate initiatives within BBMP's jurisdiction, contributing to research, policy planning, and implementation of environmental programs.

The Climate Action Cell is actively working on projects related to urban sustainabil-

ity, environmental conservation, and climate resilience at the grassroots level. Interns will gain exposure to real-world challenges and strategies in mitigating climate change effects within Bengaluru. Applicants are required to have strong proficiency in both English and Kannada to effectively communicate and coordinate with various stakeholders, including local communities and government officials. The initiative is aimed at nurturing young talent and equipping them with practical knowledge to address climate challenges. The BBMP encourages passionate individuals interested



in climate action and urban sustainability to apply for the program. This internship is expected to create a platform for knowledge exchange and skill development while strengthening Bengaluru's efforts toward climate resilience. For more

details, applicants can visit BBMP's official website or contact the Climate Action Cell directly. The selection process will consider candidates based on their educational background, relevant skills, and commitment to climate initiatives.

Whitefield Art Collective 2025 Begins in Bengaluru

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The much-awaited Whitefield Art Collective (WAC) is set to return for its eighth edition on March 27, bringing together a diverse range of artistic expressions. The month-long festival will feature over 200 installations and exhibitions, along with film screenings, puppetry performances, and interactive workshops.

With a strong emphasis on inclusivity and cultural storytelling, WAC 2025 is expected to attract artists and art enthusiasts from across the country. Curated around the theme 'Future is Now', this year's edition explores the evolving relationship between technology, society, and identity. Curator

Sumi Gupta explains that the theme aims to highlight how art remains a powerful medium for understanding and interpreting the rapid transformations in the world. "Artists are using their work to reflect on how culture, inclusivity, and storytelling continue to shape our present and future," she says. One of the key highlights of WAC 2025 is the 'Braided River Project,' an exhibition in collaboration with UNESCO that showcases the contributions of Indian



women in science. This unique exhibit aims to recognize and celebrate the pivotal role women have played in advancing scientific knowledge and innovation in

the country. Another major attraction is the Chennai Photo Biennale, making its debut in Bengaluru with the exhibition 'Hey!'. This showcase will feature works by

neurodivergent and differently-abled artists, emphasizing the importance of diverse artistic perspectives.

The exhibition seeks to challenge conventional notions of artistic ability while promoting greater representation in the art world. In addition to these key exhibitions, WAC 2025 will offer an array of interactive experiences for visitors. From engaging art workshops to thought-provoking film screenings, the festival aims to create a platform where audiences can immerse themselves in the creative process. Puppetry shows and live performances will further enhance the cultural vibrancy of the event. Over the years, the Whitefield Art Collective has established

itself as a significant platform for artistic expression, providing both emerging and established artists a space to showcase their talent.

The festival not only serves as a celebration of creativity but also as an opportunity for artists and audiences to engage in meaningful conversations about the role of art in contemporary society. With its focus on inclusivity, representation, and the intersection of art and technology, WAC 2025 promises to be an inspiring and thought-provoking event. Art lovers and enthusiasts are encouraged to participate and witness how art continues to evolve as a medium of storytelling, innovation, and cultural dialogue.

- 38 YSRCP corporators moved to Bengaluru
- NDA plans no-confidence motion against GVMC Mayor
- Resort politics resurfaces in Andhra Pradesh

TPN Correspondent | Visakhapatnam

In a dramatic political move, former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has reportedly shifted 38 YSRCP corporators to a resort in Bengaluru. This strategic relocation comes amid growing speculation of defections in the Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC), further intensifying the state's political scenario.

Jagan Shifts 38 Politicians to Bengaluru Resort Amid Political Crisis

The NDA, led by TDP and Jana Sena, has been strengthening its position in GVMC after several YSRCP corporators defected. With six members recently joining the NDA, the alliance's strength has now risen to 70, raising the possibility of a no-confidence motion against YSRCP Mayor Golagani Hari Venkata Kumari. Amid fears of further defections, YSRCP swiftly moved the corporators in two phases—initially shifting 23 corporators, followed by the remaining leaders late Tuesday night. Reports suggest that Jagan chose Bengaluru for this operation due to his strong political ties and multiple properties in the city.

The 2020 GVMC elections saw YSRCP securing 59 out of 98 seats, while TDP won 29, Jana Sena 3, and others shared the remaining seats. However, after the 2024 NDA landslide victory in the Assembly elections, the alliance gained momentum, with defections reducing YSRCP's GVMC strength to 38.

With resort politics resurfacing, speculation is rife that NDA will move a no-confidence motion soon, aiming to replace the YSRCP mayor. The unfolding political drama has now become a key battleground, drawing attention to possible future shifts in Andhra Pradesh's municipal governance.



Gold Worth ₹2.77 Crore Seized at Ahmedabad Airport

TPN Correspondent | Ahmedabad

The Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) at Ahmedabad International Airport has intercepted a significant gold smuggling operation, seizing approximately 3,050 grams of gold valued at ₹2.77 crore. The operation took place on March 23, 2025, when two passengers arriving from Abu Dhabi were apprehended for attempting to smuggle the precious metal into India.

Acting on intelligence inputs, AIU officials identified suspicious behavior in the two individuals and decided to conduct thorough inspections. The search revealed that the passengers had concealed gold in a semi-solid form mixed with chemicals, hidden within plastic strips sewn into the waistbands of their jeans. Additionally, the duo was found carrying two gold chains and a gold coin. In total, each passenger was in possession of approximately 1.5 kilograms of gold.

The authorities have detained both individuals and initiated legal proceedings under smuggling charges. Investigations are underway to determine the origins of the



smuggled gold and to identify potential connections to larger smuggling syndicates. This incident underscores the persistent challenge of gold smuggling in Gujarat, a state that has witnessed multiple such cases in recent years.

In a related development, customs officials at the same airport apprehended another passenger on March 25, 2025, for attempting to smuggle 382 grams of 24-carat gold valued at ₹34.7 lakh. The gold was concealed between the layers of the individual's leggings, processed from a gold spray paste mixed with chemicals.

These incidents highlight the evolving tactics employed

by smugglers, including the use of chemical compounds to disguise gold and innovative concealment methods to evade detection. The customs department has responded by intensifying surveillance and adopting advanced detection techniques to counteract these smuggling efforts. The frequency of such smuggling attempts is often correlated with fluctuations in gold prices, as higher domestic prices can lead to increased profit margins for smugglers. The customs authorities remain vigilant and are committed to curbing these illegal activities through continuous monitoring and enforcement actions.

Eknath Shinde Slams 'Gaddar' Jibe, Cites Mandate

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has strongly responded to the 'gaddar' (traitor) label frequently used by the Uddhav Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena. Addressing the Maharashtra Legislative Council on Wednesday, Shinde asserted that the people's mandate had already determined who the real 'gaddar' was.

The controversy reignited after comedian Kunal Kamra referred to Shinde in a satirical song, allegedly calling him a 'gaddar' without explicitly naming him. Reacting to this, Shinde alleged that Kamra had been given a 'supari' (contract) to target him. He also accused the opposition of double standards regarding freedom of speech, stating that they had previously acted against critics when in power.

Shinde pointed to the 2020 demolition of actor-MP Kangan Ranaut's Mumbai office as an example. Ranaut had vocally criticized the handling of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death by the then Uddhav Thackeray-led Maharashtra government. According to Shinde, this



incident exposed the opposition's selective defense of free speech.

The Maharashtra Deputy CM has been repeatedly called a traitor by the Uddhav faction ever since he split from the Shiv Sena in 2022 and allied with the BJP, a move that led to the fall of the Thackeray-led government and the rise of a new administration under Shinde.

During his speech, Shinde took a direct dig at the opposition, saying, "You keep calling me 'gaddar, gaddar,' but soon, you will have to shut the 'daar' (door in Marathi) of your party."

He reiterated that legal and electoral decisions had already settled the matter, highlighting that the Election Commission,

Supreme Court, and Maharashtra Assembly Speaker had all recognized his faction as the real Shiv Sena.

"The people, who are the ultimate authority, have also given their verdict. No matter how much 'supari' you give, nothing will change," Shinde asserted, referring to his party's electoral success alongside the BJP and the NCP's Ajit Pawar faction in last year's Maharashtra Assembly polls.

The war of words between the Shiv Sena factions continues to intensify ahead of crucial elections. While the opposition continues to brand Shinde a 'gaddar,' he remains firm in his stance, arguing that both legal and public opinion have vindicated him.

NWKRTC Announces Special Bus Services for Ugadi, Ramzan

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) has announced special bus services for Ugadi and Ramzan, ensuring smooth travel for passengers heading to their hometowns. To accommodate the festive rush, NWKRTC will operate 137 additional buses from key locations such as Hubli, Dharwad, Gadag, Belgaum, Uttara Kannada, Haveri, Chikkodi, and Bagalkot.

With March 28 (Friday) and March 29 (Saturday) being weekends, followed by Ugadi on March 30 (Sunday) and Ramzan on March 31 (Monday), NWKRTC has scheduled extra services from major hubs, including Bengaluru, to various intra-state and inter-state destinations. The corporation has urged passengers to utilize these special services for



a comfortable and hassle-free journey. In addition to increasing connectivity, NWKRTC has also expanded its digital payment options. Passengers can now purchase tickets using UPI-based cashless transactions, a system introduced in 2023 to address the issue of retail currency availability and enhance operational efficiency. Currently, UPI ticketing is implemented across 50 units, facilitating over 1.06 crore transactions amounting to ₹104.68 crore as of March 20 this year.

Furthermore, UPI-based payment for various commercial income streams within NWKRTC was initiated in August 2024. By the end of February 2025, a total of 43,719 transactions worth ₹11.98 crore had been completed through this system. NWKRTC Managing Director Priyanga highlighted the significant revenue growth achieved through digital payment adoption, reinforcing the corporation's commitment to modernization and passenger convenience.

Sugarcane Farmers Protest Against Yadagiri Sugar Factory

TPN Correspondent | Yadagiri

Sugarcane farmers in Yadagiri have taken to the streets, protesting against Core Green Sugar Factory for failing to clear their dues. The factory, which received sugarcane from farmers four months ago, has not yet paid the outstanding amount of ₹8 crore, pushing farmers into financial distress.

According to the agreement, the factory is required to clear payments within 35 days of receiving the sugarcane. However, despite repeated requests, farmers claim they have not been paid, affecting their ability to cover expenses for healthcare, weddings, and loan repayments. Frustrated by the delay, the farmers staged a protest in front of the factory gate, demanding immediate payment.

Some of the protestors expressed their hardships, saying they borrowed money for fertilizers, seeds, labor, and transportation, expecting timely payments. "We worked hard last summer to grow the crop, and now we are struggling



to pay our debts," one farmer lamented. Another protester, in tears, said, "I have to get my children married. How will I do that without my money?"

The farmers have also accused the factory management of avoiding their concerns, stating that officials refuse to meet them or offer a clear explanation. Enraged by this behavior, they warned that they

would seize the factory if payments were further delayed.

Responding to the protest, the factory management stated that due to bank-related issues, payments were delayed but assured that all dues would be cleared by April. Farmers, however, remain skeptical and have vowed to continue their protest until they receive their rightful payments.

TIHAR JAIL TO MOVE NEW SITE

Asia's Biggest Prison Held Many Top Inmates

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi government has announced plans to shift Tihar Jail, South Asia's largest prison complex, to the outskirts of the national capital to alleviate severe overcrowding. Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, in her Budget speech on March 25, allocated ₹10 crore for survey and consultancy services related to the relocation.

"In order to decongest the existing Tihar Jail Complex for the welfare of prisoners, a new scheme for the development of a new Jail Complex by shifting the existing Tihar Jail Complex to another location has been formulated," Gupta said while presenting the budget in the assembly.

The relocation is part of the ₹1 lakh crore budget presented by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government after securing power in Delhi following 27 years. The move comes as the prison, designed to house around 10,025 inmates, currently accommodates over 19,000, leading to severe congestion and security challenges.

History of Tihar Jail

Established in 1958, Tihar Jail, officially known as Tihar Prisons, was initially a small facility meant to house convicts from Delhi. It functioned under Punjab's administrative control until 1966, when it was transferred to the Delhi administration. Over the years, as Delhi's crime rate increased, the jail expanded into a sprawling complex spanning over 400 acres, with nine prisons in total—six in Mandoli, one in Rohini, and the rest in Tihar.

Located in West Delhi, near Tilak Nagar and Hari Nagar, Tihar Jail has long struggled with overcrowding. The Delhi government has been working on new prison complexes in Narela to address the issue, and sources indicate that an alternative site for relocation is being sought.



Infamous inmates of Tihar Jail

Tihar Jail has housed several high-profile inmates, including political figures, activists, and criminals. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, along with his colleagues Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh, and Satyendar Jain, were imprisoned in Tihar in connection with the Delhi Liquor Policy case.

Other notorious inmates include gangster Chhota Rajan, former Bihar Chief Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav (fodder scam case), international serial killer Charles Sobhraj, and Kashmiri separatists Afzal Guru and Maqbool Bhat, both of whom were executed in Tihar.

Prominent political figures such as former Union Minister P. Chidambaram, Karnataka Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar, and anti-corruption activist Anna Hazare have also spent time in Tihar. Business tycoon Subrata Roy and Olympian wrestler Sushil Kumar are among other well-known inmates.

The recently released Netflix crime drama Black Warrant, based on the book of the same name, depicts the

harsh realities of life inside Tihar Jail. The series follows the experiences of a jailer, played by Zahan Kapoor, highlighting the complex dynamics of India's most infamous prison.

Where will Tihar Jail be shifted?

Authorities have been scouting for locations to relocate the jail. Initially, a request was made for land in Baprola, but due to encroachments, it was deemed unsuitable. Tihar Jail officials have now written to the Delhi government to provide 100 acres of land elsewhere. Currently, Tihar's Jail Numbers 1 to 9 are designed for around 5,000 inmates but house over 12,000 prisoners. Meanwhile, Jail Numbers 10 to 16, meant for 3,700 inmates, currently accommodate over 3,900. Certain jails, such as Jail Number 4 in Tihar and Jail Number 12 in Mandoli, function as Mulaija Jails for first-time offenders, yet remain overcrowded.

In her budget presentation, Chief Minister Gupta also announced the formation of a new society under the Delhi Jail administration to oversee the welfare and rehabilitation of prisoners.



Proof of Citizenship to Vote Trump's New Order and the Future of US Elections

TPN | G Avinash

Hyderabad, March 27: Donald Trump's new executive order requiring proof of citizenship to vote in federal elections has sparked intense debate. The move, which also mandates that all ballots be received by Election Day, is being hailed by some as a necessary step toward election integrity, while critics argue it could lead to voter suppression. Regardless of where one stands, one undeniable fact remains—every democratic nation has its own rules for conducting elections, and the US, which often lectures other countries on electoral fairness, has long operated under a system that lacks a fundamental safeguard present in many democracies: proof of citizenship for voting.

The Case for Proof of Citizenship

In most democratic nations, voters are required to present official identification or proof of citizenship to participate in elections. Whether in India, Germany, or Canada, national voter ID systems are commonplace and widely accepted as essential tools to prevent fraud. Strangely, the US has lagged behind in this regard, allowing voter registration with minimal verification, a practice that has raised concerns over election security. Trump's executive order addresses these concerns by enforcing citizenship verification and tightening ballot submission deadlines. The directive also compels federal agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration to share data with election officials to identify non-citizens on voter rolls. If implemented effectively, this could prevent fraudulent voting and restore faith in the electoral process.

US Elections: A Double Standard?

The irony in this situation is that while the US government has frequently criticized other countries for their electoral processes, it has failed to establish basic voting safeguards at home. Even more puzzling is that Democrats, who often advocate for transparency and fairness, have opposed voter ID laws and even pushed for measures that would allow non-citizens to vote in elections. This contradiction raises a crucial question: How can the US claim to be the beacon of democracy while neglecting fundamental election integrity measures?

For years, Democrats and their allies have argued that requiring proof of citizenship would disenfranchise marginalized communities. However, a 2023 report by the Brennan Center for Justice suggested that nearly 21.3 million US citizens of voting age lack immediate access to proof of citizenship documents. While this is a legitimate concern, it is not insurmountable. Instead of opposing ID laws altogether, efforts should be made to provide accessible and free documentation for all eligible voters.

Legal Challenges Ahead

Trump's order is expected to face legal opposition, as the US Constitution grants states the primary authority over elections. While Congress has intervened in election matters through acts like the Voting Rights Act, the states remain in control of setting rules for voter registration and ballot access. This means that states unwilling to comply with Trump's directive could challenge it in court, leading to another prolonged battle over election laws.

Is Trump's Move Good or Bad for Democracy?

Love him or hate him, Trump's decision at least makes logical sense. Every democratic country has rules to ensure election integrity, and the US should be no different. While implementation must be done carefully to avoid disenfranchising voters, ensuring that only US citizens vote in federal elections is not an unreasonable expectation. If anything, it might just be the first step toward making American elections as fair and transparent as the country claims they are. The debate over voter ID laws will continue, but one thing is certain: Trump's move forces the US to address the contradictions in its electoral system. Whether this leads to stronger, more credible elections or an intensification of political battles remains to be seen.

India is The Right Example for The World

India, with a population of over 1.4 billion people and around 968 million eligible voters, sets a remarkable example of how elections should be conducted. In the 2024 general elections, around 642 million people exercised their fundamental right to vote, in this 312 million women voters, demonstrating a high level of civic responsibility. Despite the vast and diverse geography, elections are held efficiently across remote areas with polling booths reaching every corner of the country. India's Election Commission ensures results are delivered on time without delay, setting a global standard for free and fair elections. While China and Russia follow predictable outcomes, and Western nations struggle with outdated processes, it is India that exemplifies how a democracy should function. As the world's fifth-largest economy, India's electoral success should serve as a model for other nations instead of being on the receiving end of lectures on democracy from those who fail to uphold the same standards.

Will Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra Resume?

The recent diplomatic engagement between India and China at the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) meeting in Beijing has reignited discussions on the future of cross-border exchanges, including the much-awaited resumption of the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra. This development, coupled with efforts for better border management, signals a cautious yet notable shift towards stability in India-China relations. However, the larger question remains—can this be a real breakthrough, or is it another diplomatic effort that may fall short of expectations?

A Renewed Diplomatic Push

The 33rd WMCC meeting saw India and China emphasizing the need for peace at the border as a prerequisite for normalizing bilateral ties. This marks a continuation of the efforts initiated by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during their Special Representatives (SR) dialogue in December 2024. The meeting also followed Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri's recent visit to Beijing, reflecting India's sustained engagement with China on border and diplomatic matters. The discussions were led by Joint Secretary (East Asia) Gourangalal Das from the Indian side and Hong Liang, Director General of the Boundary and Oceanic Affairs Department of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The focus remained on effective border management and strengthening diplomatic and military mechanisms, which are essential given the longstanding tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), particularly in eastern Ladakh.

Border Management and Military Stability

One of the critical aspects discussed in



the meeting was the situation along the LAC, where both India and China have stationed approximately 50,000 to 60,000 troops. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) highlighted the necessity of maintaining peace and stability in these areas, underscoring that border tranquillity is crucial for fostering broader bilateral cooperation. Interestingly, China's ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, took to social media platform X to share insights into the meeting. He mentioned that both sides engaged in a "comprehensive and in-depth exchange of views" on implementing decisions made in the SR meeting. He further stated that both nations are working on "concrete and effective measures" to ensure long-term stability in the border regions.

The Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra

Among the most anticipated outcomes of these diplomatic engagements is the potential resumption of the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra, a significant pilgrimage for Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. The Yatra was suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions and escalating tensions following the Galwan Valley clash in 2020. Restoring this pilgrimage route would not just be a goodwill gesture but also an indication of improving India-China relations. The decision to restart cross-border ex-

changes, including the pilgrimage and discussions on trans-border river co-operation, showcases a willingness to rebuild trust. However, the skepticism remains—will China's commitment to this dialogue translate into tangible action, or will it remain a strategic maneuver to ease tensions without addressing core issues?

The Road Ahead

While the WMCC meeting and the possible resumption of the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra are positive steps, they are not enough to resolve the deep-rooted tensions between India and China. Future engagements must focus on sustained trust-building measures, verifiable military disengagement, and increased transparency in diplomatic negotiations. India must continue its strategic patience while ensuring that border stability does not come at the cost of its security interests. China, too, needs to demonstrate a genuine commitment to peaceful coexistence, as mere diplomatic gestures without meaningful action will not lead to a long-term resolution. For now, the WMCC meeting offers a glimmer of hope, but whether it paves the way for lasting peace or remains another chapter in the complex India-China equation is something that only time will tell.

Adani Green Energy Gallery Attracts 7 Lakh Visitors to London's Science Museum

The Adani Green Energy Gallery' at the Science Museum in London has drawn an impressive 7 lakh visitors in its first year, showcasing groundbreaking technologies aimed at creating a low-carbon future. Sponsored by Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) and curated by the Science Museum, the gallery was inaugurated on March 26, 2024, by Gautam Adani, Chairman of Adani Green Energy.

The gallery, which offers free entry, explores renewable energy's critical role in combating climate change. It highlights how the world can generate and utilize energy sustainably to accelerate the shift toward decarbonization. In a statement, AGEL revealed that within just one year, 700,000 visitors had explored the exhibit, emphasizing the public's growing interest in sustainable energy solutions.

Over the past year, the gallery has hosted more than 40 guided tours for prominent organizations, including the Climate Change Committee, the Met Office, the World Energy Council, Unverscience, and various UK Government departments. These curator-led tours have provided deep insights into the rapid energy transition and the urgent need for decarbonization to mitigate climate change's effects.

Recognized for its commitment to sustainability, the gallery won the prestigious 2024 Brick Awards in the innovation category for its groundbreaking low-carbon brick bench. The exhibit features the world's first 100% hydrogen-fired brick, showcasing an innovative approach to sustainable manufacturing. This unique bench serves as a testament to how the construction industry can significantly reduce carbon emissions, demonstrating an 81-84% reduction in emissions compared to traditional natural gas-fired brick production.

One of the gallery's standout features is its decarbonization tracker exhibit, which measures the carbon intensity of Britain's electricity supply. This exhibit tracks how many grams of carbon dioxide (CO2) were emitted per unit of electricity generated each year. According to the latest data, the UK achieved a record low in CO2 emissions per kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity supplied in 2024. The exhibit will continue to track emissions data up to 2035, offering valuable insights into the country's progress toward a cleaner energy future.

Designed by award-winning architectural firm Unknown Works, the gallery emphasizes



sizes sustainability in its construction. Key elements of the design include the reuse of redundant shelves from the Science Museum's former object store and the incorporation of recyclable aluminum to minimize environmental impact. The gallery's carbon footprint has been meticulously monitored to ensure adherence to eco-friendly practices.

As one of the world's leading renewable energy companies, AGEL boasts an operation-

al portfolio exceeding 13 gigawatts across wind, solar, and hybrid renewable energy sources. The company remains committed to advancing global net-zero goals and driving meaningful change in the renewable energy sector.

The gallery continues to serve as an important educational platform, fostering awareness about climate science and inspiring visitors to explore solutions for a sustainable energy future.



India Rejects US Religious Freedom Report, Labels USCIRF 'Entity of Concern'

India has firmly dismissed the latest report from the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), calling it biased, politically motivated, and a misrepresentation of India's religious landscape. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) expressed strong disapproval, emphasizing that the commission's assessments were not only inaccurate but also undermined India's democratic principles and pluralistic society.

The MEA's spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, addressed the media, stating that the USCIRF's 2025 Annual Report continued a long-standing pattern of issuing assessments that were neither fair nor objective. According to Jaiswal, the USCIRF's report "misrepresents isolated incidents" and projects them in a way that casts doubt on India's commitment to religious freedom. The Indian government also accused the USCIRF of pursuing a politically motivated agenda rather than addressing genuine concerns about religious freedom in India.

India, with a population of 1.4 billion people practicing various religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, and others, prides itself on its diversity and multicultural fabric. The MEA emphasized that India's pluralistic framework, which supports harmonious coexistence of its many communities, was a testament to the country's respect for religious freedom.

The MEA spokesperson went on to state that the USCIRF's report failed to acknowledge the reality of this framework, choosing instead to focus on isolated incidents that did not reflect the broader societal context. India's government further criticized the commission for being unwilling to engage with the country's constitutional safeguards, which ensure religious freedom and protect minorities. The government's response suggested that such biased assessments not only misrepresented India but also undermined the country's standing as a global beacon of democracy and tolerance.

For years, the Indian government has rejected similar reports from the USCIRF, accusing the panel of being influenced by external political and geopolitical factors rather than providing an impartial review of the situation. The government also pointed out that the USCIRF's methods were flawed, relying on unreliable sources, and ignored India's legal framework that upholds religious freedoms. India's response to the 2025 USCIRF report underscores the country's growing frustration with external criticism, particularly when such reports fail to acknowledge the complex, pluralistic nature of Indian society.

The MEA concluded by stating that it was the USCIRF, rather than India, that should be considered an "entity of concern" in the context of its politically-driven assessments.

Parliament Budget Key Discussions and Legislative Moves

- **Rahul Gandhi denied speaking opportunity in Lok Sabha.**
- **Congress MPs meet Speaker over protest.**
- **Lok Sabha debates Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill.**
- **Rajya Sabha discusses Banking Laws Amendment Bill.**
- **Lok Sabha passes Finance and Boilers Bills.**



The Budget Session of Parliament continued with significant discussions on March 26, 2025, in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The

session was marked by heated exchanges and legislative progress on key bills. In the Lok Sabha, Speaker Om Bir-

la adjourned the House before lunch, urging members to follow the procedures expected to uphold the House's dignity. This came after Congress Leader of Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, tried to raise an issue, prompting the Speaker to take action. Subsequently, several Congress MPs, including Deputy Leader Gaurav Gogoi, General Secretary K.C. Venugopal, and Whip Manickam Tagore, met the Speaker to protest the denial of an opportunity for Rahul Gandhi to speak.

The Lower House also discussed the Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill, 2025, with debates expected on its provisions. Additionally, Union Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal is set to introduce the Readjustment of Representation of Scheduled Tribes in Goa's Assembly Constituencies Bill, 2024, to address the concerns

regarding the representation of Scheduled Tribes in Goa's legislative assembly.

In the Rajya Sabha, discussions shifted to the Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, which is being debated for potential changes to the banking sector. The Rajya Sabha also scheduled deliberations on the working of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Both Houses had a relatively smooth day of functioning on March 25, 2025. The Lok Sabha successfully passed the Finance Bill, 2025, and the Boilers Bill, 2024, while the Rajya Sabha passed the Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024. These legislative moves reflect the government's continued focus on financial reforms and disaster management improvements.

Cash Found at Justice Varma's Residence, Police Investigate

A team of Delhi Police officers, led by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) from New Delhi, visited the residence of Delhi High Court Judge Justice Yashwant Varma on Wednesday, March 26, 2025, following reports of cash being found at his house in connection with an ongoing investigation. According to official sources, the police team arrived at Justice Varma's residence around 1:50 p.m. and spent approximately two hours at the location. The visit was reportedly linked to an investigation that began after a fire broke out at Justice Varma's home, during which the alleged discovery of cash was made. While the police team was at the house, they did not engage with the media, and no public statements were issued during or after their visit. After completing their inspection, the police team left

Justice Varma's residence and returned to the Tughlaq Road Police Station for further proceedings. The specific details of the cash found and the investigation remain unclear, and no further information has been released by the police at this stage. The authorities are expected to provide more details as the investigation progresses. This incident has raised questions regarding the circumstances surrounding the fire and the discovery of cash at the residence of a sitting high court judge. However, for now, the police are continuing their inquiry and have refrained from making any public comments on the matter. The situation has attracted attention, given the sensitive nature of the case involving a prominent judiciary figure, and it remains to be seen how the investigation unfolds in the coming days.



"Entity Of Concern": India Shreds US Religious Freedom Body Over Demand To Sanction RAW

- **India slams USCIRF for biased, politically motivated claims on minority rights.**
- **MEA rejects allegations of religious intolerance and misrepresentation of facts.**
- **Sanctions on R&AW dismissed, calls on US to ignore unfounded accusations.**

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

India has strongly rebutted the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) following its annual report that criticized the treatment of minorities in India. In a scathing statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), New Delhi accused the USCIRF of issuing biased, politically motivated assessments and misrepresenting facts.

The MEA expressed concern over the report's claims that religious minorities in India face deteriorating conditions. It particularly objected to the panel's recommendation of sanctions on India's external intelligence agency, R&AW, over its alleged involvement in assassination plots targeting 'Khalistani' separatists and extremists overseas.

"We have seen the recently released 2025 Annual Report of the USCIRF, which once again continues its pattern of issuing biased and politically motivated assessments," the In-



dian government said. The MEA questioned the authenticity of the panel's claims, suggesting that the USCIRF's evaluations were driven by an agenda rather than genuine concern for religious freedom.

India further criticized the USCIRF for distorting isolated incidents to undermine India's image as a multicultural society. "The

USCIRF's persistent attempts to misrepresent isolated incidents and cast aspersions on India's vibrant multicultural society reflect a deliberate agenda," the foreign ministry said. It also emphasized India's pluralistic framework, highlighting that the country is home to 1.4 billion people practicing a wide range of religions, but expressed no expectation that the USCIRF would recognize this harmonious coexistence.

Labeling the USCIRF as "an entity of concern," the Indian government made it clear that such efforts to undermine India's democracy and tolerance would not succeed. The statement further added that despite the recommendations, it is unlikely that the US government would sanction R&AW, as the USCIRF's views are non-binding.

The USCIRF report also alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the ruling BJP propagated "hateful rhetoric" against Muslims and other religious minorities, a claim that India firmly rejected.



"Clear Signal" Moscow Not Pursuing Real Peace: Zelensky On Russian Strikes

Condemns Russian Drone Attacks After Black Sea Ceasefire Agreement

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky sharply criticized Russia's latest wave of drone attacks, which saw over 100 drones launched overnight, just hours after tentative agreements for a Black Sea ceasefire were brokered. Zelensky's remarks came after the United States announced it had facilitated ceasefire discussions between the two sides in Saudi Arabia, with former President Donald Trump calling for a swift resolution to the ongoing conflict, which has now persisted for over three years.

Despite these diplomatic efforts, implementation of the ceasefire remained uncertain, as the Kremlin stated that the agreement to halt attacks on the Black Sea could only be enforced if restrictions on its agricultural sector were lifted. This condition raised doubts about the feasibility of the ceasefire taking effect anytime soon.

Zelensky condemned Russia's actions, stating that the large-scale drone strikes following ceasefire negotiations sent a clear message to the world: Moscow was not committed to pursuing genuine peace. "Launching such large-scale attacks after ceasefire negotiations is a clear signal to the whole world that Moscow is not going to pursue real peace," he wrote on social media.

Overnight, Russia launched 117 drones at Ukrainian targets, of which 56 were shot down, and 48 disappeared from radar without causing significant damage, according to Ukraine's air force. However, the strikes still inflicted damage on buildings in the central city of Kryvyi Rig and in the border region of Sumy, where images of burning structures were shared by local authorities.

The frontline areas also continued to suffer attacks, with the eastern Donetsk region reporting the deaths of three individuals in the past 24 hours, according to regional governor Vadym Filashkin. Zelensky called for stronger international pressure on Russia, urging more sanctions and robust action, particularly from the United States, to stop the ongoing strikes.

As the conflict continues, Zelensky emphasized the need for the world to act decisively to hold Russia accountable and stop the escalation of violence.



US Lawmakers Push for Sanctions on Pakistan Army Chief and Demand Release of Imran Khan

TPN Correspondent | New York

Two US lawmakers have introduced a bipartisan bill seeking to impose sanctions on Pakistan's Army Chief, General Asim Munir, accusing him of engaging in the wrongful persecution and imprisonment of political opponents, including former Prime Minister Imran Khan. The bill, named the "Pakistan Democracy Act," was introduced on Monday by Republican Representative Joe Wilson from South Carolina and Democratic Representative Jimmy Panetta from California.

The legislation accuses General Munir of "knowingly engaging in the wrongful persecution and imprisonment of political opponents," and seeks to impose sanctions on the military leader under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act. The proposed sanctions would include restrictions such as denial of entry into the United States and ineligibility for US visas. The bill also calls for identifying other individuals responsible for the alleged persecution and applying similar restrictions to them.

The bill gives the US President the authority to lift the sanctions if certain conditions are met, including the end of military rule in Pakistan, the restoration of rule of law, and a civilian-led democracy. Additionally, the release of all wrongfully detained political prisoners, including Imran Khan, would be a prerequisite for lifting the sanctions.

Representative Joe Wilson, in support of the bill, referred to Imran Khan, 72, as a "political prisoner" and blamed Pakistan's powerful military for his "unjust detention." The introduction of the bill comes amidst growing international pressure on Pakistan regarding its treatment of political opponents, particularly following Khan's imprisonment and the ongoing political turmoil in the country.

This move signals increasing concerns in the US over human rights violations in Pakistan and the role of the military in suppressing political dissent. The bill's passage could significantly impact US-Pakistan relations, especially if the sanctions are enforced.

Hostages To Return "In Coffins" If Israel Tries To Free Them By Force: Hamas

TPN Correspondent | Doha

Hamas has issued a stern warning on Wednesday, stating that hostages could be killed if Israel continues its attempts to retrieve them by force while airstrikes persist in the Gaza Strip. In a statement, the Palestinian militant group expressed concern over the safety of the captives, saying, "Every time the occupation attempts to retrieve its captives by force, it ends up bringing them back in coffins." The group claimed it was doing everything possible to keep the hostages alive, but warned that Israeli airstrikes were endangering their lives. Israel resumed its airstrikes and launched ground operations in Gaza last week, following a period of relative calm under a ceasefire that had been in place since January. These actions have resulted in a significant escalation of violence.

Since Israel renewed its military operations, at least 830 Palestinians have been reported killed, according to Gaza's health ministry, which operates under Hamas. The violence comes on the heels of the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel that killed 1,218 people, mostly civilians, according to official figures. Israel's ongoing military offensive has resulted in devastating casualties in Gaza. According to the health ministry in the Hamas-controlled territory, the toll has reached at least 50,183 Palestinian deaths, the majority of whom are civilians. The current escalation follows the violent and deadly events of October 7 and continues to wreak havoc in the region, with no sign of a peaceful resolution in sight.



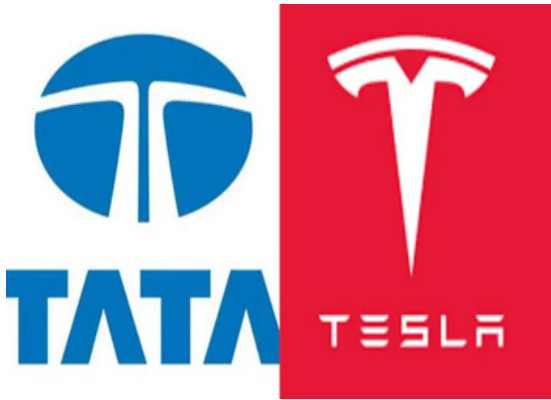
Tata Group Now Tesla's Global Supplier, Eyes Role In India Expansion

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Tata Group has reportedly become a global supplier for Elon Musk's electric vehicle (EV) company, Tesla. Several Tata firms, including Tata Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Tata AutoComp, and Tata Electronics, are now integral to Tesla's supply chain, according to a report by The Economic Times (ET). These companies have signed global agreements to supply critical components and services to Tesla, which holds a significant share of the global automotive market.

In the fiscal year 2024, Tata firms contributed approximately \$2 billion worth of supplies to Tesla, including components such as castings, forgings, electronics, and fabricated parts. As Tesla looks to diversify its supply chain, the sourcing from India is expected to increase in the future.

With Tesla exploring the possibility of setting up a manufacturing unit in India, Tata Group is positioning itself to capitalize on expanded opportunities. Tesla has been in



talks with Indian suppliers about establishing facilities near their existing manufacturing centers to strengthen the supply ecosystem. Industry sources indicated that once Tesla starts manufacturing in India, it is expected that Indian suppliers, including those from Tata, will benefit from increased sourcing opportunities.

Tesla's expansion plans in India are under careful evaluation, with the company considering various factors such as government incentives, tax benefits, and potential duty waivers before finalizing its decision.

The EV giant is reportedly in talks with multiple states, including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Telangana, to assess suitable locations for a production facility.

If Tesla moves forward with its plans, Tata Group's role in the supply chain could further grow. Tata companies such as Tata AutoComp, Tata Technologies, TCS, and Tata Electronics provide specialized EV products, product lifecycle management services, circuit-board technologies, and chips, respectively. These contributions are crucial to Tesla's production of advanced electric vehicle components.

While Tesla maintains strict non-disclosure agreements with its suppliers, it is expected to source key components like electric motors, wiring harnesses, suspension systems, and electronic components from Tata, particularly for Tesla's battery management systems and motor controllers. The growing collaboration between Tata Group and Tesla could strengthen India's position as a key player in the global EV supply chain.

Markets Tumble as Profit Booking and Global Cues Weigh on Sentiment



Domestic stock markets, which started flat today, ended with heavy losses. Mixed signals from global markets, benchmark indices touching key resistance levels, investors booking profits, Donald Trump's tariffs coming into effect from April 2, and US GDP figures are due. Investors started selling from intraday highs. Shares in media, realty, oil, healthcare and PSE sectors were volatile. Overall, Nifty lost 181 points and Sensex lost 728 points.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 78,017 in the previous session, opened at 78,021 on Wednesday. It touched an intraday low of 77,194. It reached an



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intraday high of 78,167. It ended at 77,288, down 728 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 23,700, touched a low of 23,451 and a high of 23,736. It closed at 23,486, down 181 points. The Nifty Bank lost 398 points and settled at 51,209.

In the Nifty50, 9 companies gained and 41 lost. Media, realty, healthcare, oil, PSE, PSU bank, CPSE, IT, finance, pharma, commodities, private bank and energy stocks were the top gainers. IndusInd, Trent, Hero Moto, Grasim, Power Grid were the top gainers. NTPC, Tech Mahindra, Cipla, Bajaj Finance and Axis Bank were the biggest losers.

Market breadth on NSE today completely shifted in favour of sellers. Out of 2985 stocks traded, only 622 gained. 2303 lost. 52 shares hit 32-week highs. 187 shares hit 52-week lows. 52 shares touched the upper circuit and 180 shares touched the lower circuit.

25 lakh shares changed hands in NMDC. Cult Fit has reportedly selected five banks as lead bankers for the IPO. Bharti Airtel has paid additional spectrum dues of Rs 6000 crore in advance. LTI Mindtree has expanded its partnership with Arenco Group. Hinduja Leyland has approved allotment of one crore shares to Ashok Leyland at Rs 200 each. Shares of Awas Finance, SBI Card and Chambal Fertilizers hit 52-week highs. Julian Bear's Mark Matthews said that \$10 billion in US tariffs will do nothing for the \$4 trillion Indian economy. Banks may cut interest rates from April. NetWeb shares have fallen 37% in 6 months. Bharti Airtel launched IPTV services in 2000 cities. Shares of Amara Raja and Exide rose after the inclusion of lithium-ion batteries in the list of core auto components. LT received orders worth Rs 15,000 crore from different companies.

HCL Technologies :
HCL Technologies has scheduled its Q4 FY2024 results announcement for May 2025. The company has consistently demonstrated robust financial



performance in previous quarters. Investors are keenly awaiting the upcoming results to assess the company's growth trajectory.

Bharti Airtel :



In Q2 FY2024, Bharti Airtel reported a consolidated net profit of ₹3,593 crore, a 168% year-on-year increase, driven by tariff hikes. The average revenue per user (ARPU) rose to ₹233 during this period. The Q3 FY2024 results are anticipated to be announced on February 6, 2025.

Siemens India :
For Q1 FY2024, Siemens India reported a 21.6% year-on-year increase in consolidated net profit, reaching ₹426.8 crore, despite a slight decline



in revenue. The company's strategic initiatives and operational efficiencies have contributed to this profit growth.



Ambuja Cements :
Ambuja Cements' Q3 FY2024 results, announced on January 29, 2025, indicated a net sales figure of ₹5,043.18 crore, reflecting the company's steady market presence. Detailed financial metrics and performance indicators were provided in the official release.

Varun Beverages :
In Q1 CY2024, Varun Beverages reported significant growth, with net sales increasing to ₹5,043.18 crore. The company's expansion strategies and increased market penetration have contributed to this upward trend.



Indian Stock Markets and Rupee Recover All Losses in 2025



The Indian stock markets and the rupee have successfully recovered all their losses in 2025, as investor sentiment improved significantly. On Monday, the benchmark indices, BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty, rose by 1.4% and 1.32%, respectively, as foreign institutional investors (FIIs) turned net buyers. The rupee also extended its gains for the seventh consecutive session, appreciating by 31 paise to close at 85.67 against the US dollar, bolstered by lower global crude prices and a weakened greenback.

FIIs' return to the Indian markets after a prolonged period of selling, coupled with bargain hunting at lower levels and better valuations, has supported the rally. Additionally, the Federal Reserve's signals of

two rate cuts in 2025 have further boosted investor confidence.

On Monday, the 30-share Sensex surged by 1,078.87 points, reaching a six-week high of 77,984.38. During the day, it briefly rose 1.56% to 78,107.23. The 50-share Nifty also climbed by 307.95 points to 23,658.35, reflecting strong market momentum. In March alone, the Sensex gained 4,786.28 points, or 6.53%, and in just six trading days, it added more than Rs 27 lakh crore to investors' wealth.

In contrast, February saw a decline of 5.55%, and January recorded a small dip of 0.81%. The recent rally has been driven by value buying, with valuations returning to long-term averages and early signs of earnings growth recovery emerging.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Ltd., noted that increased government spending and expectations of monetary easing are likely to drive growth in rate-sensitive sectors such as banking, NBFCs, autos, consumer durables, and real estate. These sectors are expected to outperform in the near future. However, the sustainability of the rally will depend on upcoming economic data, including PMI figures and Q4 earnings. The broader market also saw positive movement, with the BSE midcap and smallcap indices rising by 1.32% and 1.17%, respectively. All sectoral indices closed higher, with the banking sector leading the charge, up 2.53%.

Bharti Airtel Prepays Additional Rs 5,985 Crore in High-Cost Spectrum Liabilities

Bharti Airtel, alongside its subsidiary Bharti Hexacom, has prepaid an additional Rs 5,985 crore of high-cost spectrum liabilities to the Department of Telecom (DoT), further reducing its debt burden, the telecom giant announced on Wednesday. Airtel stated that the prepayment of these liabilities, related to the 2024 auctions, has fully settled the high-interest debt of 8.65%. As part of its broader financial strategy, Airtel's subsidiary, Network i2i Ltd, has also voluntarily redeemed \$1 billion worth of perpetual debt securities.

Airtel emphasized its commitment to financial prudence and operational efficiency, noting that these prepayments contribute to a reduction in both its debt and the cost of debt. So far, Airtel has prepaid Rs 25,981 crore of spectrum liabilities for the fiscal year 2025, bringing the total amount prepaid to Rs 66,665 crore. This is part of Airtel's ongoing effort to lower its debt load, with the prepayments made roughly seven years ahead of their original maturities.

The company pointed out that the interest rates on the prepaid spectrum liabilities averaged 9.74%, with previous prepayments clearing debts carrying interest rates of up to 10%. These proactive prepayments have



eliminated Rs 1,16,405 crore in scheduled instalments that would otherwise have been payable over the remaining tenure of the liabilities. As a result of these actions, Airtel has reduced its cost of debt on the residual spectrum liabilities to approximately 7.22%, based on the remaining Rs 52,000 crore in spectrum dues. These liabilities are set to be paid off in annual instalments until FY 2042.

Additionally, Airtel's subsidiary, Network i2i, has exercised its call option to redeem \$1 billion in perpetual notes, which had an interest rate of 5.65%. After this redemption, Airtel will have approximately \$479 million in outstanding perpetual notes, which are callable in FY 2026.

India's Fuel Consumption Declines in February 2025 Amid Shift to Alternative Fuels

India's fuel consumption saw a noticeable decline in February 2025, primarily driven by a growing shift towards alternative fuel sources like electric vehicles (EVs) and compressed natural gas (CNG), according to a report by SBI Securities.

The report revealed that petrol consumption in India fell to a 12-month low of 3.1 million metric tonnes (MMT) in February, marking a 5.4% decline compared to the previous month. However, when

compared to February 2024, petrol consumption was still 3.5% higher on a year-on-year (YoY) basis. Despite the monthly decline, this was the lowest petrol consumption recorded in the current financial year. In contrast, May 2024 had witnessed the highest petrol consumption at 3.4 MMT.

The shift in fuel consumption patterns is attributed to the increasing adoption of electric vehicles and CNG, especially in the light commercial vehicle segment, which

traditionally relied heavily on diesel. Diesel consumption, a key fuel for transportation and industrial activities, also saw a drop in February 2025. Diesel usage stood at 7.3 MMT, marking a 5.1% drop month-on-month (MoM) and a 1.2% decrease compared to February 2024.

The decline in diesel demand highlights a significant change in the fuel mix, with alternative energy sources like electric vehicles gaining traction across the country. The ongoing transition to EVs and

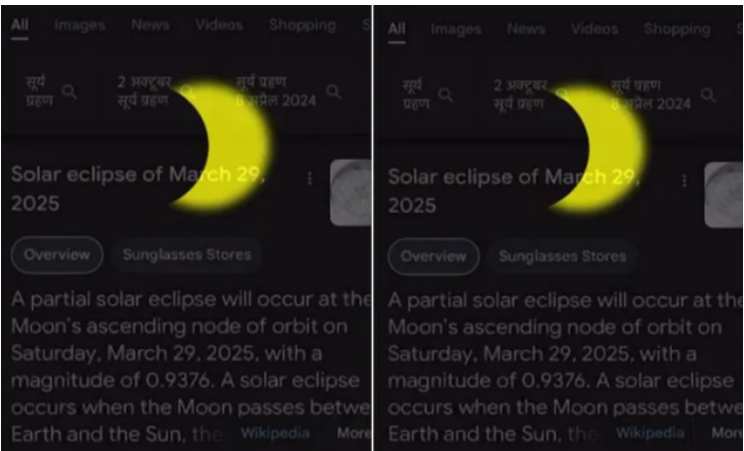
CNG in the commercial sector, coupled with growing environmental awareness and government incentives, has contributed to the decrease in traditional fuel consumption.

As more consumers and businesses move towards sustainable energy solutions, the trend of reduced petrol and diesel consumption is expected to continue, signaling a shift towards greener alternatives in India's transportation and energy sectors.



Google Celebrates March 29 Solar Eclipse with Special Animation

Google is gearing up for the much-anticipated total solar eclipse on March 29, 2025, with a special interactive Doodle. Users searching for eclipse-related terms, such as “solar eclipse,” “solar eclipse 2025,” or “total solar eclipse” on Google, will be treated to a unique animated overlay illustrating the celestial event. The animation visually depicts the moment when the moon passes between the Earth and the Sun, blocking sunlight and revealing the Sun’s corona, its outermost layer. The Doodle, which will appear as an overlay on the search results page, serves as an engaging way for users to learn about this remarkable astronomical event. It offers a vivid de-



picture of the eclipse, where the Moon will obscure the Sun, and users will get a glimpse of the Sun’s corona – a feature visible only during a total solar eclipse.

Visibility of the Solar Eclipse

While the solar eclipse will be a spectacle for many, it

won’t be visible from India. This total solar eclipse is expected to be partially visible in several regions across Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, and parts of the Arctic. In India, the eclipse will not be observable due to its specific alignment and the time difference.

The event will occur between 2:20 pm IST and 6:13 pm IST, with the peak of the eclipse at 4:17 pm IST. However, since the Moon’s shadow will not cross India, the country will miss the sight of the eclipse.

When and Where to View the Eclipse

The eclipse will begin around 4:50 am EDT in the US and will peak at 6:47 am EDT, lasting until 8:43 am EDT. Areas like New York City, Boston, Montreal, Quebec, parts of Europe, and regions in Siberia and Africa will have the best views. This will be the first solar eclipse of 2025, offering a spectacular display for viewers across several continents, even though it will not be visible in India.

Kozhikode Youths Develop AI-Powered ‘Coco-Bot’ To Solve Kerala’s Coconut Farming Woes

The tradition of climbing coconut trees to harvest coconuts in Kerala is rapidly fading, leaving farmers struggling with labor shortages. Despite initiatives by the Coconut Development Board, which has trained over 32,000 individuals in the past 12 years, only a small fraction of them continue in the profession. In response to this growing crisis, four young innovators from Kozhikode have introduced an AI-powered machine, ‘Coco-Bot’, designed to transform coconut harvesting. While machines for coconut cutting have existed in the past, ‘Coco-Bot’ stands out due to its efficiency and ease of use. Unlike traditional methods that often require multiple workers, this semi-automatic device can be operated by just one person,



providing a practical solution to the labor shortage in the sector. Coconut farmer K. Sadanandan, who has tested the machine, praised its effectiveness, saying, “With Coco-Bot, harvesting coconuts has become remarkably easier. It saves both time and effort.”

The inspiration for the

machine came from an unexpected source – the bathroom. In 2020, Ashwin P. Krishna, the founder of ‘Coco-Bot’, was looking at a coconut tree from his balcony when the idea struck him: could an automated machine be developed to harvest coconuts? This thought led him to begin extensive research

and development. After two years of hard work and innovation, the team successfully created the ‘Coco-Bot’, a machine that promises to revolutionize coconut harvesting in Kerala. As the demand for efficient and labor-saving technology grows in agriculture, ‘Coco-Bot’ emerges as a promis-

ing solution, offering a glimpse into the future of coconut farming in the state. The machine not only addresses the immediate issues of labor shortages but also provides an easier, more sustainable way to harvest coconuts, ensuring that the industry continues to thrive amidst changing times.

Facebook and Instagram Restore Services After Widespread Outage

Facebook and Instagram services were briefly disrupted, causing widespread frustration among users. The outage, which appeared to affect millions globally, led to issues with logging in, posting content, and accessing features on both platforms. Many users took to Downtetector, a website that tracks service disruptions, to report the problems, which seemed particularly prominent in the US and the UK. For several hours, users across multiple regions experienced being logged out of their accounts and were unable to log back in. Some also encountered errors when trying to refresh their newsfeeds, post content, or send messages. The outage affected both Facebook and Instagram, leaving many unable to interact with the platforms as usual. On Instagram, additional issues included difficulties accessing and engaging with comments, with some users unable to see or interact with comments under posts. The issue prompted a flood of complaints on social media and downtime tracking sites, as users struggled to use the apps for work, entertainment, and communication. Many of the com-



plaints pointed to errors that hindered basic activities, such as viewing, liking, or commenting on posts.

By the following day, services were largely restored, and both platforms confirmed that the issue had been resolved. However, the outage left users questioning the reliability of major social media platforms. Although these platforms have become integral to online communication, disruptions like

these can lead to significant user frustration.

The outage served as a reminder of how reliant people have become on social media platforms, both for personal and professional use. While Facebook and Instagram have not disclosed the cause of the disruption, it highlights the ongoing challenges in maintaining global online services for billions of active users.

This Is The World’s Most Dangerous Road



Driving on a long, open road can often be a relaxing experience, but some roads are so treacherous that even the most skilled drivers would think twice before venturing onto them. One such road, regarded as the most dangerous in the world, is located in Turkey. The thrill of navigating its perilous mountain passes offers a unique challenge, but it can also be nerve-wracking for those brave enough to attempt the journey. According to an Audit Central report, the 105-kilometer-long D915 road connects the cities of Of in Trabzon province to Bayburt in eastern Turkey. This route links Turkey’s northeast Anatolia region to the Black Sea, but it has gained infamy for its treacherous twists and sharp turns that make driving extremely difficult. The narrow and winding path offers minimal room for error, with steep cliffs and sharp bends that

add to the perilous nature of the journey.

The history of D915 dates back to 1916, when the Russian army captured the city of Trabzon. To ensure strategic movement, the army constructed the road using basic hand tools. Over the years, some parts of the road have been paved with asphalt, but a majority of the route remains covered with loose gravel. While it might seem manageable at first, the gravel sections make the journey increasingly treacherous as the drive progresses.

Driving on D915 is a test of both skill and courage, with the combination of unpredictable terrain, sharp turns, and steep drops making it one of the most dangerous roads in the world. For those who dare to take on the challenge, the journey is as exhilarating as it is risky, offering an adventure that few would forget.

Study Suggests First Stars May Have Created Water in the Early Universe

A groundbreaking study published in Nature Astronomy on March 3, 2025, proposes that the universe’s earliest stars could have been responsible for the creation of water. The study, led by astronomer D.H. Whalen from the University of Portsmouth, suggests that water may have first appeared in the cosmos as these ancient stars exploded in supernovae. This discovery challenges existing theories and could push back the timeline for the emergence of life-bearing planets.

Water, the third most abundant molecule in the universe, has long remained a mystery in terms of its origins. Following the Big Bang 13.8 billion years ago, the first stars formed a few hundred million years later. These stars were primarily composed of hydrogen and helium and burned hydrogen in their cores. Once they exhausted their hydrogen, they exploded as supernovae, leaving behind remnants of oxygen and other elements. In this new study, Whalen and his team ran 3D simulations of supernovae from population III

stars, the universe’s oldest stars made entirely of hydrogen and helium. They discovered that the conditions created by these stars were capable of forming water when oxygen produced during the supernovae combined with hydrogen. The formation of water in the early universe would have been crucial for creating the elements necessary for life.

While the formation of water could not have occurred before these supernovae exploded, the study suggests that the first stars might have formed enough water to significantly impact the infant universe. Water likely played a role in forming the early planets, which could have been home to life far earlier than scientists previously believed.

The findings imply that planets and even the basic elements needed for life could have been present long before the first galaxies took shape. If these results are confirmed, astronomers will have to reconsider the timeline of life’s potential emergence in the universe, pushing it back billions of years earlier than previously thought.





KKR Secure First Win of IPL 2025 as RR Suffer back-to-back Defeats

Kolkata Knight Riders secured their first win of IPL 2025 with a dominant eight-wicket victory over Rajasthan Royals on Wednesday. South African opener Quinton de Kock led the charge with an unbeaten 97, guiding KKR to chase down 152 with 15 balls to spare.

After electing to field, KKR's spinners Moeen Ali and Varun Chakravarthy played a key role in restricting Rajasthan Royals to 151/9. Despite a brisk start, RR struggled against disciplined bowling, losing wickets at regular intervals. During the chase, De Kock

provided a solid foundation, smashing eight fours and six sixes in his 61-ball innings. Although Moeen Ali (5) and skipper Ajinkya Rahane (18) fell early, impact substitute Angkrish Raghuvanshi contributed 22 runs in an unbeaten 83-run partnership with De Kock.

The South African opener sealed the win in style, smashing a six off Jofra Archer. With this victory, KKR bounced back from their opening loss to Royal Challengers Bengaluru, while Rajasthan Royals suffered their second consecutive defeat.

BCCI Central Contracts

Shreyas Iyer Set for Return

Debate Over Senior Players' A+ Retention

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is yet to finalize its central contracts for men, amid discussions on key changes in the A+ category following the retirement of stalwarts Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, and Ravindra Jadeja from T20 Internationals. The delay has sparked speculation about possible reshuffling, with differing opinions among stakeholders on the retention of senior players in the top category.

The A+ grade, offering a ₹7 crore retainer-ship, is traditionally reserved for players active across all formats. With Kohli, Rohit, and Jadeja now playing only Tests and ODIs, Jasprit Bumrah remains the lone all-format certainty. While some in the BCCI favor retaining the trio in A+, others argue for a revision based on current format participation.

In the A category (₹5 crore retainership), Ravichandran Ashwin's retirement means his exclusion is certain. Axar Patel, a key all-rounder and vice-captain for the England T20I series, is a strong contender for promotion from Grade B.

Shreyas Iyer, who missed out last season, is set to return after featuring in 11 ODIs this



year. Young talents like Yashasvi Jaiswal, Akash Deep, and Sarfaraz Khan are likely to be inducted, with their performances meeting the selection criteria. Nitish Kumar Reddy, having played the full Border-Gavaskar series and multiple T20Is, is also expected to be included.

Meanwhile, players like Shardul Thakur and Ruturaj Gaikwad may miss out, as they

do not currently meet the required match count. However, the selection committee, in consultation with the head coach and secretary, retains the discretion to make exceptions.

The final contract list, expected soon, will reflect BCCI's strategic decisions regarding player retention, promotions, and future squad planning.

Chelsea Eye Permanent Jadon Sancho Deal Despite Cancel Clause

Chelsea are reportedly set to proceed with Jadon Sancho's permanent signing from Manchester United, despite having a £5 million (\$6.4 million) clause that could allow them to cancel the deal. The winger joined Chelsea on loan last August in a deal that included an obligation to buy him for £25 million.

Sancho, 24, made a promising start at Stamford Bridge but has struggled for consistency, scoring just twice in all competitions and failing to find the net since December. His lack of impact has led to speculation that Chelsea could invoke the clause to back out of the deal.

However, reports indicate the club remains committed to signing

him, believing he can recapture the form he showed during his Borussia Dortmund spell, where he played a key role in their Champions League final run. Chelsea manager Enzo Maresca has publicly praised Sancho's progress, stating he has been impressed by his performances despite his struggles.

Sancho's move to Chelsea followed a fallout with Manchester United boss Erik ten Hag, which saw him frozen out of the squad before being loaned to Dortmund in January 2024. Meanwhile, Chelsea were linked with United winger Alejandro Garnacho in January and could still look to reinforce their attacking options in the summer, even if Sancho stays.



Pant-Goenka Chat After LSG's Loss to DC Sparks Meme Fest



Delhi Capitals pulled off a thrilling one-wicket victory over Lucknow Super Giants in their IPL 2025 clash on Monday, thanks to an explosive 66-run knock from Ashutosh Sharma. However, the post-match focus shifted to an intense conversation between LSG captain Rishabh Pant, head coach Justin Langer, and team owner Sanjiv Goenka.

The interaction quickly became a talking point on social media, with fans drawing parallels to Goenka's viral chat with KL Rahul after a heavy defeat in IPL 2024. Memes flooded the internet, with some jokingly speculating about Goenka's disappointment over LSG's failure to defend 210 runs.

Ashutosh, making his

debut for Delhi, turned the game around after DC struggled at 65-5. His power-hitting, combined with a crucial 39-run cameo from Vipraj Nigam, guided DC to victory with three balls to spare.

Lucknow had a chance in the final over with six runs needed, but a stumping opportunity against Mohit Sharma went begging as Pant failed to collect the ball cleanly. Ashutosh capitalized on the miss, smashing a six off Shahbaz Ahmed to seal the win.

After the loss, LSG players looked dejected, while DC captain Axar Patel cheekily remarked, "Be prepared for it now. It's going to be like this only under my captaincy—things will be up and down a little."

Australia Unveils Plans for New Stadium for 2032 Olympics



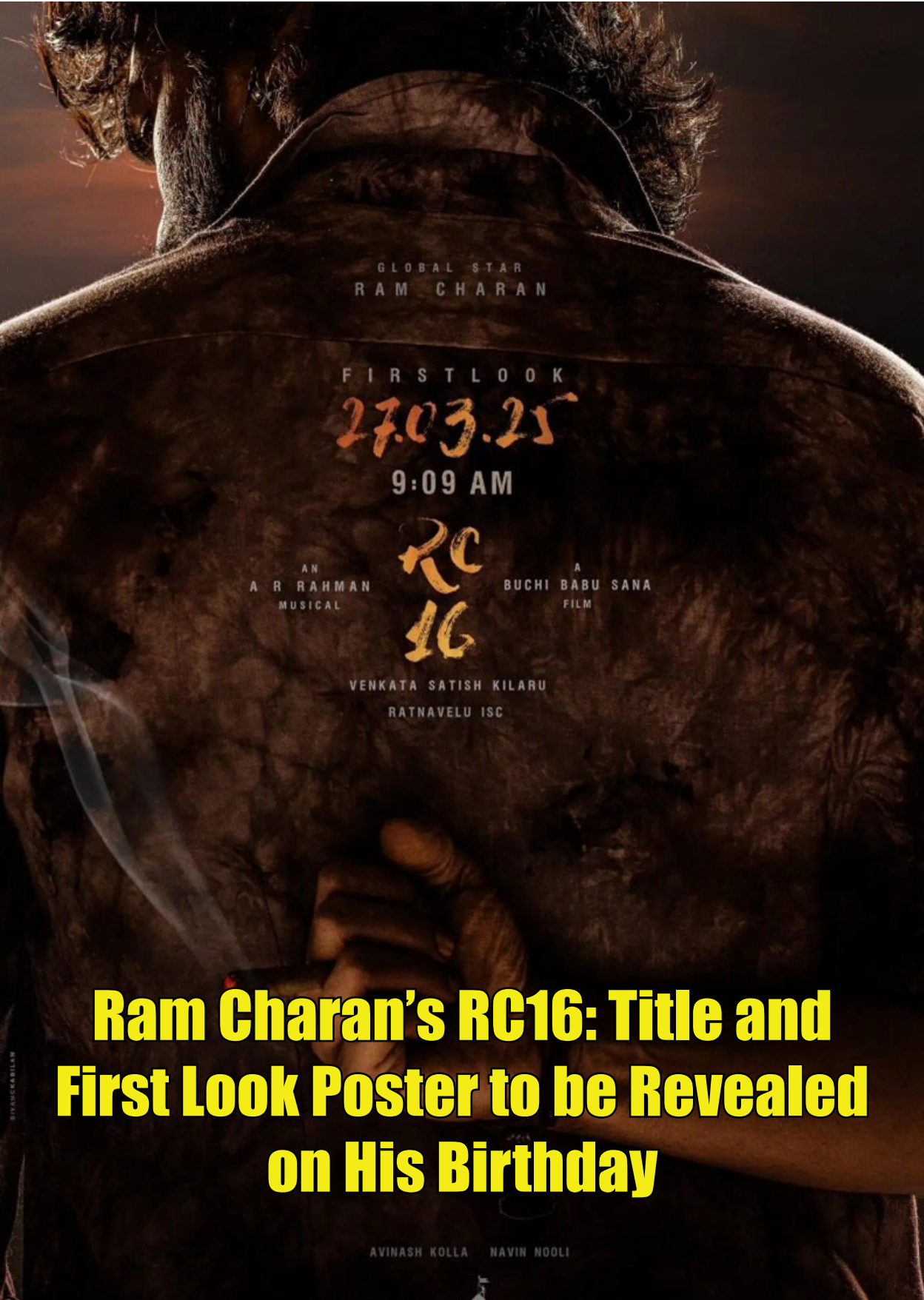
Australia has announced plans for a new 63,000-seat stadium and an indoor aquatic centre as part of preparations for the 2032 Olympic Games in Brisbane. Queensland Premier David Crisafulli revealed the updated infrastructure strategy, emphasizing long-term benefits over short-term spending.

"Finally, Queensland has a plan. The time has come to just get on with it. And get on with it we will," Crisafulli stated, confirming that the new stadium would be a permanent world-class venue for future sporting events. The aquatic centre, with temporary seating increasing capacity to 25,000, will host swimming, diving, water polo, and other aquatic sports. The main athletes' village will be constructed at

the Brisbane Showgrounds, with additional accommodation hubs on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.

This new plan replaces an earlier proposal by the previous Labor government, which aimed to renovate the historic Gabba cricket ground and build a 17,000-seat indoor stadium. Crisafulli scrapped those ideas, arguing that billions would have been wasted on temporary venues that lacked lasting value.

In addition to the new stadium and aquatic centre, authorities have earmarked funds for upgrading smaller venues, including the Queensland Tennis Centre and the Gold Coast Hockey Centre. While specific costs have not been disclosed, Australia has set aside approximately \$4 billion for Olympic infrastructure.



Ram Charan's RC16: Title and First Look Poster to be Revealed on His Birthday

Tollywood fans are buzzing with excitement as Ram Charan's birthday approaches, with a highly anticipated update about his upcoming film, RC16. After much speculation and intrigue, the team behind the movie has officially announced that the title and first look poster of RC16 will be unveiled tomorrow, March 27th, at 9:09 AM, in celebration of the actor's special day. In anticipation, a striking pre-look poster has already been released, featuring a clenched fist holding a beedi, a powerful image that has sent the actor's fans into a frenzy. In RC16, Ram Charan will be seen in a rugged, intense role,

portraying a champion of traditional rural sports such as power cricket, kabaddi, and wrestling. The film promises to be a gripping rural sports drama, filled with action-packed sequences. The shooting for the movie took place across various locations, including Mysore, Hyderabad, and New Delhi, setting the stage for some thrilling sequences on screen. A special addition to the cast is Kannada star Shiva Rajkumar, who returns to work after overcoming cancer. He will play the role of Ram Charan's coach, adding another layer of depth to the movie. Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor makes her second ap-

pearance in Tollywood with this project, and Mirzapur fame Divyendu Sharma will also have a pivotal role in this pan-India action drama. Directed by Buchi Babu Sana, the filmmaker behind Upenna, RC16 is produced by the Vriddhi Cinemas banner, with Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings presenting the film. The music for this highly-anticipated movie is composed by the legendary AR Rahman, adding further excitement to the already star-studded project. With the title and first look coming tomorrow, fans are eagerly awaiting what promises to be another hit for the charismatic Ram Charan.

Keerthy Suresh to Romance Ranbir Kapoor in Upcoming Film

Keerthy Suresh, one of the leading stars in South Indian cinema, is making waves in Bollywood after her Hindi debut in Baby John, which, despite being a box office disappointment, hasn't deterred her career. The actress, known for her versatile per-

formances, has signed a major new project that has everyone talking. According to recent updates, Keerthy will star opposite Bollywood heartthrob Ranbir Kapoor in an upcoming film. Although the details about the director and plot are still un-

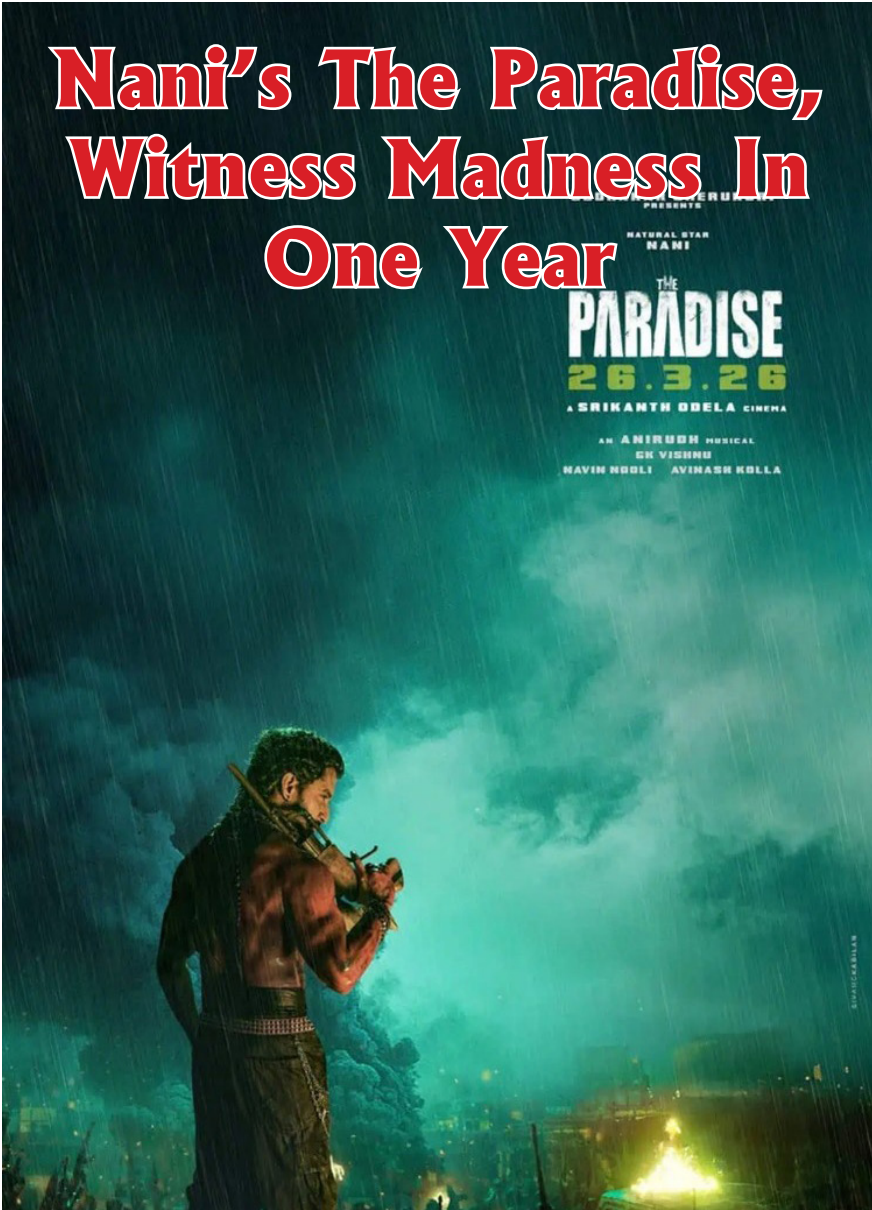
der wraps, the news of Keerthy landing a role alongside Ranbir Kapoor has already stirred excitement. Securing a project with such a prominent Bollywood star is a significant achievement, and many are applauding Keerthy's resilience in continu-

ing to bag impressive roles despite her earlier setback. In addition to this exciting new venture, Keerthy will soon be seen in the Hindi series Akka, where she will take on a negative role. This shift to a more complex character further highlights her versatility and growing presence in the Indian entertainment industry. As the buzz around Keerthy's pairing with Ranbir Kapoor continues to grow, fans are eagerly awaiting more details about this collaboration. With both stars known for their acting prowess, expectations for the film are already running high. Stay tuned for more updates as this promising project unfolds.



Natural Star Nani is once again taking a bold step in his career with his upcoming project The Paradise, directed by Srikanth Odela, who made a massive impact with his debut film Dasara. The first glimpse of The Paradise has already set high expectations, showcasing Nani in a never-before-seen rugged and intense look, which has intrigued audiences and raised the bar for the movie. Scheduled for release on March 26th, 2026—exactly one year from today—The Paradise has now dropped an exciting new poster that further fuels the anticipation. In this striking visual, Nani is seen holding a gun, surrounded by explosions and armed men, exuding a fierce and rugged persona. The poster not only highlights Nani's powerful character but also emphasizes the grand production scale of the film.

Produced by Sudhakar Cherukuri under the SLV Cinemas banner, The Paradise is set for a global release, marking an international reach for the film. In an exciting move, the film will



also be available in both English and Spanish, expanding its audience beyond the Indian subcontinent. With music composed by the talented Anirudh Ravichander and cinematography by GK

Vishnu, the film is expected to deliver an immersive cinematic experience. As fans eagerly await the release, one thing is certain: The Paradise promises to be a thrilling, action-packed film

that will keep viewers on the edge of their seats. With a year still to go, the excitement is already building for what is expected to be one of the biggest cinematic experiences of 2026.

Varun Tej's New Film VT15 Begins Shoot with Exciting New Promo

Mega Prince Varun Tej has teamed up with director Marlapaka Gandhi for his upcoming project VT15, which is being jointly produced by UV Creations and First Frame Entertainment. The film's pooja ceremony took place yesterday, and the regular shooting of the movie has also officially begun. In the meantime, the makers have released an intriguing promo that blends the chilling thrills of Korea with the excitement of India. The fusion showcased in this promo hints at the unique backdrop

and genre of the film, sparking curiosity among the audience. Alongside Varun Tej, the promo also features director Merlapaka Gandhi, actor Satya, and a Korean girl who adds an element of mystery, giving fans a glimpse into the film's exciting narrative. The promotional video strikes a lively and fun tone while teasing the chilling experience the movie aims to deliver. VT15

promises to be an action-packed thriller, mounted on a grand scale with a high budget. The movie's technical aspects are expected to be top-notch, with the talented S Thaman on board to compose the music. While the rest of the cast and crew details

are expected to be revealed soon, VT15 is already generating buzz for its intriguing concept and the fresh fusion of Korean and Indian elements, making it one of the most awaited films. Fans are eager to see how Varun Tej's new venture unfolds on the big screen.



Pradeep Ranganathan's Next Bilingual Film Announced with Grand Pooja Ceremony

Pradeep Ranganathan's rise in the film industry has been meteoric, following his successful directorial debut with Comali and his blockbuster performance in Love Today. His recent film, Dragon, has also become a hit in both the Tamil and Telugu markets. Now, the talented actor-director is all set to take on a new challenge with his next bilingual project, #PR04, which has been officially announced by Mythri Movie Makers. The film, directed by first-time filmmaker Keerthiswaran, was launched with a grand pooja ceremony, marking the beginning of an exciting new chapter in Pradeep's career. The first glimpse of the film, captured during the



muhurtham sequence, showcases an intriguing blend of intensity and charm. In a captivating moment, Pradeep's character transitions from a serious stare to a playful kiss, teasing the audience with the promise of a fresh and fun storyline. In #PR04, Pradeep Ranganathan stars opposite Mamitha Baiju, who gained recogni-

tion for her role in Premalu. Senior actor Sarath Kumar also plays an important role, adding depth to the cast. The technical team behind the film is equally impressive, with music composed by the young sensation Sai Abhyankkar and cinematography by Niketh Bommi, ensuring a high-quality cinematic experience.