



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

PM Modi to Visit Rameswaram Temple and Inaugurate Pamban Bridge Amid AIADMK Alliance Talks

AIADMK-BJP alliance talks intensify ahead of Tamil Nadu Assembly elections

Historic temple visit highlights Modi’s emphasis on Hindu heritage.

First vertical lift railway bridge in India enhances maritime navigation.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Tamil Nadu on April 6, coinciding with the Ram Navami celebrations, to pay tribute at the Ramanathaswamy temple in Rameswaram and inaugurate the new Pamban Bridge. His visit comes amidst growing speculation about the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) finalizing a coalition with the Opposition All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) ahead of the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

The visit, which blends pilgrimage and infrastructure development, follows a series of high-profile meetings between AIADMK chief E. Palaniswami and BJP leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP President J.P. Nadda. This has sparked discussions about the possibility of a renewed alliance between the AIADMK and BJP, which had previously fractured before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Key issues, including tensions between Palaniswami and Tamil Nadu BJP chief K. Annamalai, are expected to be resolved before formalizing any coalition.

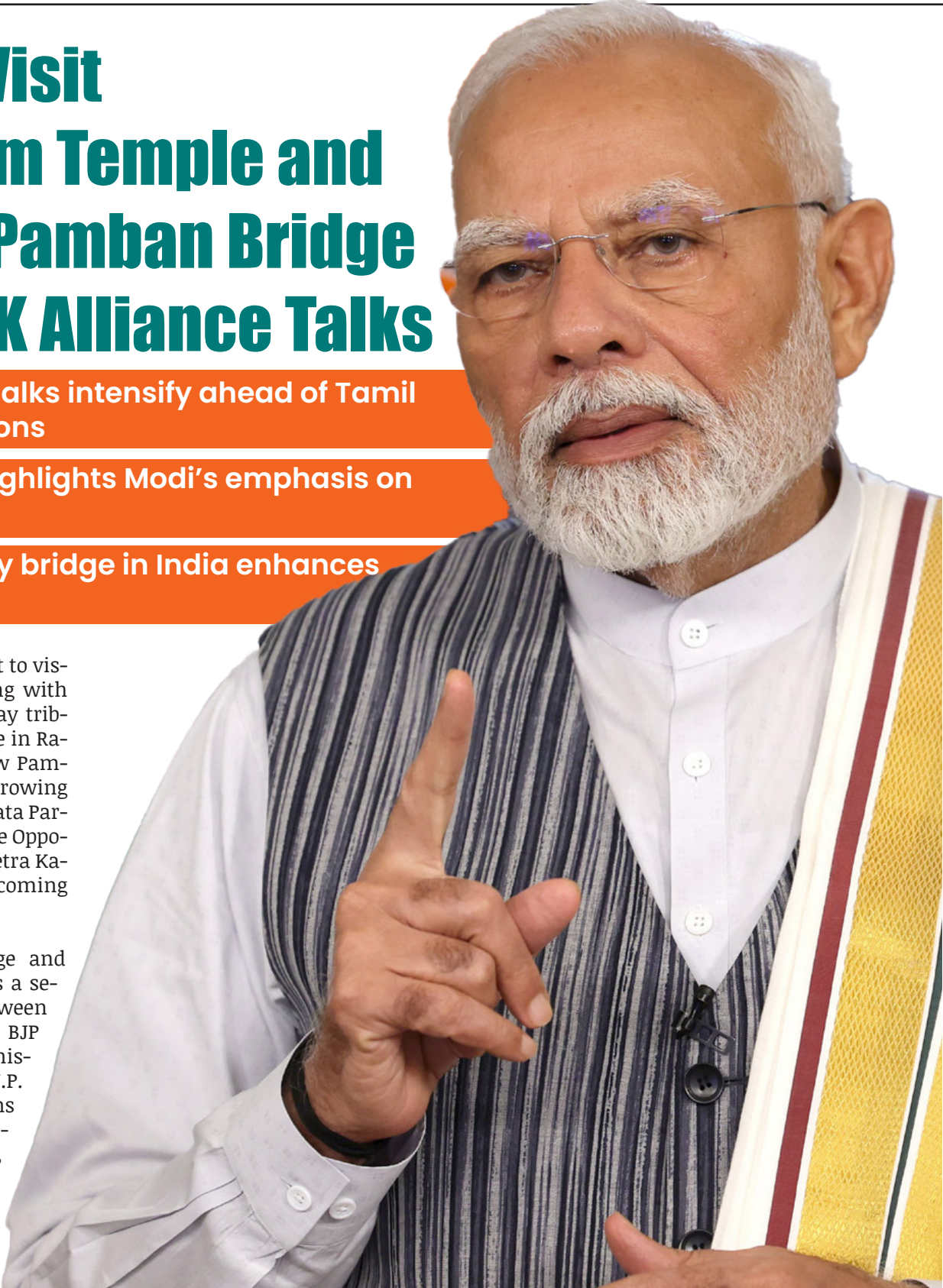
The timing of Modi’s visit to the Ramanathaswamy temple is particularly significant. The temple is associated with the Ramayana, and its Shiva linga is believed to have been installed by Lord Rama. Modi’s previous visit to the temple in January 2024, just before the consecration of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, was deeply emotional

for the Prime Minister, who described it as an unforgettable experience.

On the infrastructure front, Modi will also inaugurate the New Pamban Bridge, India’s first vertical lift railway sea bridge. This new bridge will connect Rameswaram, a sacred island, to the mainland. The previous Pamban Bridge, which had suffered erosion and was unable to meet modern

2.08 kilometers and features a 72.5-meter vertical lift span to allow ships to pass beneath.

The New Pamban Bridge is designed for long-term durability, with enhanced clearance for larger vessels and a lifespan of up to 58 years, marking a significant step in both heritage preservation and modern infrastructure development.



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.”

Maternity scheme severely underfunded: Sonia Gandhi in RS

Calls out govt for dilution of maternity benefits



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Congress leader Sonia Gandhi accused the Narendra Modi-led government of severely underfunding the maternity entitlements under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) of 2013. Speaking during Zero Hour in the Rajya Sabha, she questioned why the number of beneficiaries for maternity schemes, particularly the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), had drastically fallen.

Sonia highlighted that the NFSA,

passed in 2013 under then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s leadership, includes a maternity entitlement of Rs 6,000 per child for pregnant women in the informal sector. The PMMVY, which was launched in 2017, seeks to fulfill this entitlement, but it provides only Rs 5,000 for the first child and an extension for the second child if it is a girl.

She referred to an analysis showing that

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UPI Transactions Faced Disruptions Across India

Over 3,000 complaints on Downdetector 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 Downdetector,

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Delhi HC Issues Notice to PWD Minister Parvesh Verma Over Election Plea

Next hearing on May 27 with ECI and candidates expected to respond.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued a notice to Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Verma in response to a plea challenging his election from the New Delhi constituency in the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections.

Justice Jasmeet Singh directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) and 23 other candidates, including Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit, to respond to the petition. The plea, filed by Vishvanath Agarwal, claims that he was not allowed to file his nomination and participate in the election process despite being present at the returning officer’s office with the required documents before the 3 p.m. deadline on January 17.

The petitioner contends that this denial

of the nomination submission affected his ability to contest the election, and he has sought a direction to declare the election result for the New Delhi constituency null and void. Agarwal has further requested that the ECI be instructed to conduct fresh elections for the seat.

In the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, Parvesh Verma of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) secured 30,088 votes, defeating his closest rival, AAP’s Arvind Kejriwal, by a margin of 4,089 votes.

Sandeep Dikshit also contested from the same constituency.



The Delhi Assembly elections were held on February 5, and the results were declared on February 8. The court has listed the matter for further hearing on May 27, and the Election Commission, represented by advocate Ankit Agarwal, is expected to respond to the plea during the next hearing.



Jaishankar and US Chamber of Commerce President Discuss Strengthening India-US Trade

- India-US Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) talks progressing.
- Goal: Reduce trade barriers and strengthen supply chains.
- BTA's first phase expected by fall 2025.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, met with US Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Suzanne Clark in New Delhi on Wednesday to discuss enhancing bilateral trade, investment opportunities, building resilient supply chains, and fortifying the strategic partnership between the two countries.

Jaishankar shared his thoughts on the meeting through a post on X, stating, "Glad to meet President & CEO @USChamber @SuzanneUS-CC today. A useful exchange on deepening trade and investments, building resilient supply chains, and strengthening India-US strategic partnership."

Earlier in March, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) highlighted the progress made in India-US bilateral trade negotiations. The two countries are working on advancing trade, improving market access, and reducing barriers in both tariffs and non-tariff areas. The goal is to create a Bilateral Trade Agreement

(BTA) that covers multiple sectors, benefiting both nations.

MEAs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal mentioned that Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, had visited the US from March 3-7. During this visit, Goyal met with US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer to further the discussions on the BTA.

Jaiswal said, "India and the US are actively working to build a framework for the BTA, which aims to expand trade, enhance market access, reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers, and integrate supply chains more deeply."

This effort to advance bilateral trade negotiations is also tied to the vision set forth by US President Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The two leaders aim to finalize the first phase of the BTA by the fall of 2025, marking a key milestone in the growing economic and strategic ties between India and the US.

The ongoing negotiations reflect both countries' commitment to strengthening their partnership, enhancing economic cooperation, and fostering a more resilient global supply chain.

Sambhal violence: SIT serves SP MP Barq notice at Delhi residence

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) investigating the Sambhal violence case served a notice to Samajwadi Party MP Ziaur Rehman Barq at his residence in Delhi on Tuesday. This came after the team was unable to find anyone at his house in Sambhal earlier that day. According to officials, Barq has been asked to join the probe on April 8, and he confirmed his willingness to cooperate in the investigation.

"I have received the notice. Since I am an MP and a citizen of this country, I will cooperate in the investigation. I have been called on April 8, and I will go," Barq told PTI over the phone. However, he dismissed the allegations against him as "baseless," expressing his trust in the law, Constitution, and judiciary.

Earlier on Tuesday, after failing to locate Barq at his Sambhal residence, Superintendent of Police Krishan Kumar Bishnoi stated that the SIT would travel to Delhi to serve the notice personally, asking Barq to join the investigation.

This development comes two days after Zafar Ali, the president of the Shahi Jama Masjid Management Committee, was arrested in connection with the violence during a protest on November 24, 2024. The protest was against



a court-ordered survey of the Mughal-era mosque, which resulted in violent clashes. The violence led to the deaths of four people and left several others, including police officers, injured.

Sambhal SP Bishnoi had stated on Monday that Barq's statement was critical as he had been named as an accused in the case. The investigation continues as authorities look to identify all those involved in the deadly violence.

Indian roads will be better than U.S. in two years: Nitin Gadkari

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, announced ambitious plans for India's road infrastructure, stating that within two years, India's highway network will surpass that of the United States in terms of quality and efficiency. Speaking at the Times Drive Auto Summit and Awards 2025, Gadkari expressed confidence that the changes underway in the road sector would be transformative.

"I don't think there is any problem in the road sector. The changes this year and next year will be so significant that earlier I used to say our highway road network would match that of the US, but now I say that within two years, our highway network will be even better than the US," he stated.

The Minister highlighted that India's road sector is evolving rapidly, with major improvements in road quality and infrastructure. He also pointed



ed out the economic impact of road accidents, revealing that India loses approximately 3% of its GDP annually due to road accidents. This underscores the importance of improving road safety and infrastructure.

Gadkari further emphasized that India is on track to surpass the United

States in electric vehicle (EV) adoption and manufacturing within the next five years, noting significant progress in this sector. He also mentioned that transportation between major cities like Delhi, Dehradun, Jaipur, and Bengaluru would become much faster due to these infrastructure advancements.

When asked about Tesla's potential entry into India, Gadkari welcomed competition, saying the market is open for all manufacturers. He expressed optimism that Indian car manufacturers will focus on quality over cost, ensuring competitive pricing for consumers.

The Union Minister also reiterated his commitment to reducing logistics costs in the country, with a target to bring it down to single-digit percentages from the current 14-16%. He revealed a goal to build 60 kilometers of road network daily, further contributing to India's growing infrastructure and economic competitiveness.

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Maternity scheme severely underfunded: Sonia Gandhi in RS

in 2022-23, about 68% of pregnant women received at least one installment of PMMVY for their first birth. However, this figure sharply dropped to just 12% in the subsequent year. Sonia questioned the government's handling of the situation and demanded an explanation.

The Congress leader further stated that full implementation of maternity benefits under the NFSA would require an annual budget of around Rs 12,000 crore. However, the government's budget documents fail to provide separate information on allocations for the PMMVY. Sonia pointed

out that while the budget mentions 'Samarthya' under 'Mission Shakti,' which has a modest allocation of Rs 2,521 crore, it indicates the severe underfunding of the PMMVY, violating the provisions of the law passed by Parliament.

This marks Sonia Gandhi's third intervention during the ongoing Budget Session. Earlier, she had called for an early decennial Census to bring 14 crore more people under the food security net and had criticized the government for undermining the MGNREGA scheme.

UPI Transactions Faced Disruptions Across India

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. "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.

Justice Yashwant Varma 'cash haul': SC refuses urgent mentioning of plea seeking FIR

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Supreme Court on Wednesday rejected an urgent plea for an immediate hearing regarding a petition demanding Delhi Police to file a complaint and investigate the discovery of burnt bundles of cash at the residence of Delhi High Court Judge Justice Yashwant Varma earlier this month. The petitioners, raising concerns over the delay in filing an FIR, argued that it hinted at a potential cover-up.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna told advocate Mathews J Nedumpara, one of the petitioners, not to make "public statements" and stated that the matter would be listed in due course. The petitioners had raised alarm over the lack of immediate action when Delhi firefighters were called on Holi to extinguish a fire in an outhouse on the grounds of Justice Varma's bungalow. During the fire, the burnt piles of cash were discovered.

The petitioners questioned why the cash was not seized, no recovery document prepared, and why criminal law wasn't applied immediately. They also

expressed concerns over the delay in the public becoming aware of the incident, which they claimed suggested an attempt to cover it up. They further questioned why Justice Varma, who has distanced himself from the money, did not file an FIR.

The petitioners referred to the discovery as "open-and-shut," alleging that the cash was black money accumulated from corrupt judicial practices. They also raised doubts about Justice Varma's version of events and the overall handling of the case. Additionally, the

petitioners challenged the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court's in-house inquiry committee, questioning the 1991 ruling that requires consultation with the Chief Justice of India before registering a case against high court judges.

The incident has sparked wider discussions on judicial transparency, with political parties and the union government now weighing in. Last week, the Supreme Court transferred Justice Varma to the Allahabad High Court, a move initially linked to the cash recovery, though later de-linked.



Nitish Kumar's Leadership in Bihar: A Delicate Balance for BJP Ahead of Elections

Why BJP needs a limping Nitish Kumar as crutch in Bihar

TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been under scrutiny in recent months, with several slip-ups, health concerns, and his controversial political moves raising questions about his future as the state's leader. Despite these issues, Kumar remains a key figure for the ruling BJP-led NDA alliance, particularly as the Bihar Assembly elections loom closer.

Nitish Kumar's recent actions, including laughing during the national anthem and his awkward attempts to touch the feet of attendees, have drawn criticism, especially from political rivals like the RJD and Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj. Despite such incidents, Nitish Kumar is adamant about leading the state, with his son Nishant Kumar pushing for his continuation as CM. The BJP, while hesitant to name him as the official CM candidate, remains reliant on the 74-year-old leader, given his significant role in Bihar's electoral landscape.

Kumar's JD(U) party, though holding a smaller share of seats in the Bihar Assembly, has been an asset to any coalition it joins, particularly due to his social engineering skills and appeal among Bihar's



- Nitish's EBC, Kurmi support crucial for NDA's Bihar strategy.
- BJP must decide whether to back Nitish or risk losing key voters.
- "Sushashan Babu" image contrasts with RJD's past rule.

Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) and Kurmi community. Nitish's governance, which has focused on improving law and order and infrastructure, has earned him the moniker "Sushashan Babu," contrasting sharply with the RJD's controversial rule.

Even with BJP's seat advantage, Nitish remains integral to the NDA's success, as his leadership can help bridge gaps between the BJP's upper-caste support and the EBCs. However, with Bihar's political dy-

namics evolving, the BJP faces a tough decision: continue with Nitish Kumar, who offers stability but is showing signs of vulnerability, or risk alienating his base and potentially losing crucial votes to emerging players like Kishor's Jan Suraj.

The Bihar elections are fast approaching, and the BJP must carefully weigh the political cost of keeping Nitish Kumar as its CM face amidst the growing concerns over his leadership.

Communist parties will enter 21st century, but it may only be in 22nd: Tharoor's swipe at LDF

TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor took a sharp dig at Kerala's Left Democratic Front (LDF) government, criticizing the delay in embracing progressive changes. Tharoor's remarks came after the Kerala Assembly passed the Kerala State Private Universities (Establishment and Regulation) Bill, 2025, marking a significant shift from the CPI(M)-led government's traditional opposition to the privatization of education.

In a scathing comment, Tharoor said, "So Kerala's LDF government has finally done the right thing, by permitting private universities to open in the state. As usual, the decision comes about 15 to 20 years late, which is usually the case with those anchored in a 19th-century ideology." He

further pointed out the historical reluctance of Communist parties to accept technological advancements, recalling incidents from India's early years of technological progress.

Tharoor took to X (formerly Twitter) to add, "Never forget that when computers first came to India, Communist goons entered public sector offices to smash them." He also mentioned how Communist parties were among the strongest opponents of mobile phones when they were introduced in India, highlighting the delayed acceptance of technological and social changes



by the Left parties.

"The only parties to object to the introduction of mobile telephones in India were also the communist ones," Tharoor continued. He emphasized that it took the Communist parties years to realize that such advancements benefited the common people, whom they claimed to represent.

Tharoor's comments reflect his ongoing criticism of the LDF government's policies and their delayed adaptation to modernization. The Kerala State Private Universities Bill, 2025, is seen as a move toward privatizing higher education in the state, a shift that has been met with mixed reactions. While some see it as a step toward progress, others view it as a departure from Kerala's historically strong public education system.

K Palaniswami Meets Amit Shah Amid Talks About Revival Of Alliance With BJP



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

AIADMK General Secretary and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami met Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday, fueling speculation that his party might revive its alliance with the BJP ahead of the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. The meeting comes after a period of tension between the two parties following the AIADMK's decision to sever ties with the BJP in September 2023.

Sources indicate that during the meeting, Palaniswami raised several important is-

ssues, including the alleged imposition of Hindi in Tamil Nadu. He also conveyed his party's stance on various other matters, although specific details of the discussions were not immediately made public.

The AIADMK, which is currently the main opposition party in Tamil Nadu, had cut its ties with the BJP in the lead-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. This decision followed growing disagreements with the state leadership of the BJP, particularly with Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai's confrontational approach. The situation escalated when senior AIADMK leaders met BJP Pres-

ident J P Nadda in New Delhi and presented their concerns, including calling for an apology from Annamalai for his controversial remarks about Dravidian leader C N Annadurai or his potential removal.

In the months following the split, Annamalai's criticism of the AIADMK appeared to soften, leading to speculation about a potential rapprochement between the two parties. If the AIADMK and BJP were to reconcile, they could form a formidable opposition to the ruling DMK-led INDIA alliance in the state, which currently dominates Tamil Nadu politics.

The AIADMK has seen a decline in its vote share in recent years, and a renewed alliance with the BJP might provide the party with the necessary boost to regain its political footing. While the future of the AIADMK-BJP relationship remains uncertain, Tuesday's meeting suggests that discussions around a potential partnership are still very much on the table.

Delhi HC issues notice in plea challenging Atishi's assembly election win

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued a notice in a petition challenging Atishi's election as the Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Kalkaji, accusing the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader of engaging in "corrupt practices" and misusing her position as the Chief Minister for electoral advantage. The plea, filed by Kalkaji voters Kamaljit Singh Duggal and Ayush Rana, alleges that Atishi violated the Representation of the People Act and the Model Code of Conduct during the February 2025 elections.

Atishi had won the Kalkaji seat by more than 3,500 votes, defeating Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Ramesh Bidhuri, despite AAP's defeat in other parts of Delhi and the loss of top leaders, including Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia. A bench of Justice Jyoti Singh directed the Election Commission of India (ECI) and Delhi Police to respond to the petition and preserve all related records. The next hearing is



scheduled for July 30.

The petitioners accused Atishi of exploiting public resources, alleging that she used official vehicles and sought assistance from government officials to boost her campaign. They also claimed that Atishi's associates, working within the Delhi Chief Minister's office, bought votes on her behalf and published fake videos that falsely accused BJP candidate Bidhuri of involvement in hooliganism. Furthermore, the petition alleged that AAP workers, with Atishi's consent, arranged free transportation for voters to

and from polling stations.

Additionally, the petition pointed out that Atishi failed to disclose certain criminal cases in her election affidavit. The petitioners have requested the court to declare her election as null and void due to these alleged irregularities.

While lawyers for the ECI and Delhi Police objected to being named in the petition, the court allowed them to file a response. It also granted them the opportunity to challenge the petition during the upcoming hearing.

"I'm Stopped From Speaking," Rahul Gandhi Hits Out At Lok Sabha Speaker

Accuses Speaker Om Birla of Stifling Opposition's Voice in LS



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, has sharply criticized Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla for allegedly preventing him from speaking in the House, calling it an undemocratic practice. Gandhi expressed his frustration with the Speaker's actions after being repeatedly denied an opportunity to address the House. Speaking to the media, the Congress leader said, "I don't know what is going on. I requested him to let me speak, but he just ran away. This is no way to run the House. The Speaker didn't let me speak and then adjourned the House without any reason."

Gandhi, the Member of Parliament

from Rae Bareilly, pointed out that it is a well-established convention for the Leader of the Opposition to be given a chance to address the House. "Whenever I stand up, I am not allowed to speak. I did nothing. I was sitting quietly and I haven't been allowed to speak for 7-8 days. This is a new tactic. There is no place for Opposition," he added. He mentioned that even when Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed the Kumbh Mela, he was not permitted to raise issues like unemployment or provide his perspective on the matter.

The Speaker had earlier adjourned the House and remarked that all members must maintain decorum. "Several instances have come to my notice where the conduct of members has not met

the high standards of this House. I expect the Leader of the Opposition to adhere to Rule 349, which governs conduct within the House," Birla said, alluding to the need for decorum.

This incident follows a recent uproar during Prime Minister Modi's address on the Maha Kumbh, where opposition members protested over the tragic stampede in Prayagraj. Gandhi had wanted to acknowledge the Kumbh as part of India's cultural heritage but also sought recognition of the lives lost in the tragedy. He further emphasized that, according to democratic principles, the Leader of the Opposition should always be given a chance to speak.

CM Rekha Gupta Stops Her Convoy to Address Stray Cattle on Delhi Flyover



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's convoy was forced to make an emergency stop on the Haiderpur flyover this morning when a group of stray cattle blocked the road. Upon seeing the animals, the CM immediately got out of her car and instructed officials to find a shelter for the cows.

According to an eyewitness, a major accident was narrowly avoided when the driver of the convoy applied the brakes just in time after spotting the stray cattle on the flyover. A video released by the Chief Minister's office showed her taking a moment to inquire about the welfare of the animals on the flyover. She spent approxi-

mately 15 minutes waiting for the cows to move so her convoy could pass.

Following the incident, Chief Minister Gupta directed officials to take immediate action to prevent stray cattle from wandering onto roads and flyovers. She emphasized the importance of arranging proper shelters for the animals to ensure their safety and minimize such disruptions in the future.

The incident took place as the CM was touring various parts of Delhi, just a day after presenting the city's record ₹1 lakh crore budget. During her tour, she also took the opportunity to listen to public grievances from different constituencies.

While inspecting metro pillars during her visit, Gupta noticed several posters and hoardings hanging from them. She immediately raised concerns about the practice and ordered officials to remove the banners. Gupta emphasized that such acts not only spoil the city's aesthetic appeal but also undermine efforts to maintain a clean and beautiful urban landscape. She stated that actions like these should be discouraged and penalized.

The CM's proactive approach to addressing both the issue of stray cattle and the problem of illegal hoardings reflects her commitment to improving the city's infrastructure and maintaining order in public spaces.

- Instructs officials to find shelter for the animals.
- Accident narrowly avoided; orders issued to prevent such incidents.
- Directs removal of illegal hoardings on metro pillars.

Delhi weather: City sees 'hottest day' of 2025, As Temperatures Soar to 37.1°C



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi experienced its hottest day of the season on Tuesday, March 25, with temperatures reaching 37.1°C, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). This was 1.1°C above the usual seasonal average. The monitoring station at Ridge recorded an even higher temperature of 38.7°C, which was 4.9°C above normal, marking an intense heat spike in the capital.

Humidity levels during the day fluctuated between 22% and 59%, while the minimum temperature was recorded at 16°C. The IMD had previously forecast clear skies for the day, with the temperature soaring to 37°C. Despite the heat, the minimum temperature was relatively moderate, settling at 16°C.

On Wednesday, March 26, Delhi recorded a minimum temperature of 17.7°C, slightly above the season's average by 0.4°C. The maximum temperature was expected to rise further, with predictions indicating a high of 38-39°C. The minimum temperature for the day was expected to settle around 18°C. According to the IMD, there was no significant change in temperature from the previous day, with maximum temperatures ranging from 36°C to 39°C, and minimum temperatures between 17°C

and 20°C. These temperatures are notably higher than normal, with minimum temperatures exceeding the usual range by 1-3°C and maximum temperatures soaring 4-7°C above the seasonal average.

In terms of air quality, Delhi remained in the "poor" category on Tuesday, with an Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 234 at 4 pm. However, the Central Pollution Control Board indicated that air quality could improve, with the AQI likely shifting to the "moderate" category starting Wednesday, a trend that is expected to continue for the next two days.

As the city continues to experience intense heat and pollution, residents are advised to stay hydrated and take necessary precautions to protect themselves from the harsh weather conditions.

50K additional CCTVs to be installed in Delhi

Govt Unveils New Measures to Strengthen Women's Safety and Mobility



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a bid to enhance women's safety and mobility, the newly formed Delhi Government has announced the installation of 50,000 additional CCTV cameras across the city, which will supplement the existing 2.8 lakh cameras already operational. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta made this announcement during the presentation of the Budget on Tuesday, emphasizing the importance of security, especially for women.

"Keeping in view the security needs, especially for women, it is proposed to install 50,000 new cameras in Delhi," CM Gupta stated, underlining the government's commitment to improving safety measures. Despite the extensive CCTV infrastructure already in place, many women, including students and working professionals, still feel unsafe, particularly during late-night commutes. A past field report by The Tribune highlighted that the presence of surveillance cameras has not fully

ly alleviated these concerns, suggesting that there are gaps in the system's ability to provide a sense of security.

Alongside the CCTV expansion, another key initiative introduced by the government is the launch of travel cards for women, set to replace the current pink ticket system that offers free bus rides. CM Gupta explained that this move aims to reduce corruption and bring greater transparency to the free travel scheme for women.

These announcements reflect the Delhi Government's continued focus on improving women's safety and mobility. However, the true impact of these measures will be scrutinized closely, as previous efforts have not always led to significant improvements in women's sense of security. The success of these initiatives will depend on effective implementation and their ability to address the persistent concerns of women in the city.

Budget ₹117 Crore Allocated for Tourism and Cultural Development In Delhi

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

In her budget speech on Tuesday, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced a significant boost to Delhi's tourism and cultural sectors, with an allocation of ₹117 crore for the tourism industry in the 2025-26 Delhi Budget. This marks an increase of over 77% from the previous year's allocation of ₹66 crore, highlighting the government's commitment to promoting Delhi as a key tourist destination.

A major initiative under this budget is the introduction of boat tours along the Yamuna River. The tours will operate from Sonia Vihar in northeast Delhi to Jagatpur Shani Mandir, aimed at showcasing the city's natural beauty and cultural heritage. The project, developed under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model, is being carried out in collaboration with the Inland Waterways Authority of India and the Delhi Development Authority.

To further strengthen Delhi's position as a cultural hub, the Chief Minister empha-

sized plans to host an international film festival in the city, with an allocation of ₹30 crore to facilitate this initiative. This move is aimed at boosting the city's film industry while attracting global filmmakers and film enthusiasts.

Additionally, iconic landmarks such as the War Memorial, Kartavya Path, the Prime Minister Museum, and the New Parliament House will be promoted as key tourist attractions, forming a new "tourist circuit" to enhance the city's tourism offerings.

The Delhi government also proposed ₹25 crore to brand and promote the city as a



prime tourism destination. In line with its cultural enrichment efforts, an annual winter festival featuring cultural shows, food festivals, and musical concerts will be organized to engage both residents and visitors.

In an effort to encourage local talent, a new Talent Hunt Scheme has been introduced with a proposed fund of ₹5 crore. The scheme will provide a platform for students, young professionals, and self-taught artists to showcase their creativity and preserve the city's cultural heritage.

The budget also proposes an increased allocation for the Maithili-Bhojpuri Academy, with funding rising from ₹3.50 crore to ₹6.30 crore to promote regional languages.

The overall allocation for the Department of Art, Culture, and Languages is ₹139 crore, underscoring the government's commitment to fostering cultural development and tourism in Delhi.

Delhi to have centre for real time air, water quality monitoring: Govt

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi's air quality index (AQI), which had remained in the 'moderate' category for the past eight days, deteriorated and plunged into the 'poor' category on Monday. This prompted the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) to activate Stage I of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), which had previously been suspended when the AQI had shown signs of

improvement.

On Monday, Delhi's AQI reached 206, surpassing Sunday's reading of 194. This shift back into the 'poor' category marks the fourth such occurrence this month. In total, Delhi has experienced four 'poor' air days (AQI ranging from 201-300), 19 'moderate' air days (AQI between 101-200), and two 'satisfactory' air days (AQI between 51-100) this month.

Under Stage I of the GRAP, several measures will be implemented to reduce air pollution. These include restrictions on the use of construction



and demolition activities in non-permissible zones, and the use of coal or firewood in hotels and open eateries. The government has also urged industries to follow protocols to minimize emissions during this period.

The rise in pollution levels has been attributed to a combination of factors, including vehicular emissions, stubble burning, and weather conditions. With the onset of cooler weather, stagnant air has contributed to

the accumulation of pollutants in the capital, further exacerbating the situation.

Residents have been advised to limit outdoor activities, especially individuals with respiratory conditions or those in sensitive groups, such as children and the elderly. Authorities are closely monitoring the air quality and are ready to implement additional measures if the AQI continues to worsen in the coming days.

Rs 2.36 Lakh Crore Budget Focuses on Health

Punjab Minister Announces First-Ever "Drug Census"



TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh

Punjab's Finance Minister, Harpal Singh Cheema, presented a Rs 2.36 lakh crore budget for the 2025-26 fiscal year, emphasizing key initiatives to combat the state's drug crisis, enhance healthcare, and stimulate rural development. Notably, no new taxes were introduced, and the much-discussed Rs 1,000 monthly cash grant for women, a key poll promise, was not mentioned in the budget.

A primary concern for the government is the rampant drug menace, which Cheema termed as the "biggest threat" to the state's prosperity. In response, the Punjab government will conduct a groundbreaking "drug census" next fiscal year, collecting data from every household to assess drug use and de-addiction efforts, which will inform a targeted strategy to combat the issue.

The budget outlines a major expansion of the state's health insurance scheme, set to cover all 65 lakh families across Punjab with Rs 10 lakh worth of insurance per year. Those enrolled in central government

schemes will receive an additional Rs 5 lakh top-up, with all beneficiaries receiving a "Sehat Card" for cashless treatment in hospitals throughout Punjab. The health sector allocation stands at Rs 5,598 crore, marking a 10% increase from the previous year.

The Punjab government is also rolling out a new scheme to incentivize crop diversification in Bathinda, Kapurthala, and Gurdaspur, with a focus on Kharif maize crops. A substantial Rs 9,992 crore has been earmarked for agricultural power subsidies, alongside plans for a shrimp processing unit to support waterlogged farming areas.

Additionally, the government plans to reduce fees for doorstep delivery of government services from Rs 120 to Rs 50, aiming to make access to public services more affordable. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann's leadership is credited for driving significant progress across the state, with Cheema describing the vision for a "Badal-da Punjab" (Changing Punjab), with a focus on inclusive and progressive development.

Gold smuggling case: Ranya Rao has admitted to using hawala channels, argues prosecution



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Kannada actress Harshavardhini Ranya, also known as Ranya Rao, who was arrested in a gold smuggling case, has reportedly admitted to using hawala channels to facilitate gold purchases, according to the prosecution. This statement, made before a special court on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, strengthens the case against her. The court has reserved its decision on Ranya Rao's bail plea until March 27, following detailed arguments from both the defense and the prosecution. During the hearing, Ranya Rao's lawyer, Kiran Jawali, argued for her release, while the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) lawyer, Madhu Rao, presented evidence suggesting Rao's direct involvement in the illegal transfer of funds related to gold smuggling. As part of the legal proceedings, au-

thorities have invoked Section 108 of the Customs Act, which mandates a judicial inquiry into financial irregularities and potential violations of law. The investigation is focused on uncovering the full extent of the illegal transactions and any links to a larger smuggling network. On March 3, gold bars worth ₹12.56 crore were seized from Ranya Rao at Kempegowda International Airport when she arrived from Dubai. Subsequently, searches were conducted at her residence, where officials recovered additional gold jewelry worth ₹2.06 crore and Indian currency totaling ₹2.67 crore. In connection with the case, Ranya Rao's stepfather, K Ramachandra Rao, a senior officer with the rank of DGP, was placed on compulsory leave by the Karnataka government. He has been questioned by authorities in relation to the gold smuggling operations. Meanwhile, Ranya Rao's mother has approached the Karnataka High Court with a plea seeking guidelines for media coverage in this case, which the court has issued a notice to the Centre on. As the investigation continues, the case has attracted significant attention due to the involvement of a prominent actress and her connections to senior officials.

AAP Accuses UP Government of Promoting Alcoholism with 'One Plus One Free' Liquor Scheme



TPN Correspondent | UP

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has accused the Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government of encouraging alcoholism by allegedly endorsing a "one plus one free" liquor scheme in the state. The allegation, made by Delhi AAP chief Saurabh Bharadwaj, claims that liquor shops in Uttar Pradesh are offering free bottles of alcohol with every purchase, sparking concerns about the impact on public health.

Addressing a press conference, Bharadwaj expressed his disbelief that no action had been taken against these liquor shops despite growing evidence on social media. "We are seeing many videos from across Uttar Pradesh showing long queues outside liquor shops. This is nothing but a conspiracy to make people alcoholics. I want to ask Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath why there has been no bulldozer action against these shops," he said.

Bharadwaj raised further questions about the approval of this scheme, asking if it had been sanctioned by the BJP's central leadership. "Has CM Yogi started this 'one plus one free' alcohol scheme after consulting the BJP leadership? If not, why is the central BJP leadership silent on this?" he queried, implying that the state government's actions could be part of a larger political strategy.

The AAP also targeted the Uttar Pradesh government in a post on social media platform X, questioning the BJP's role. "A river of liquor is flowing in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh. At liquor shops in Noida, a free bottle of alcohol is being given with each purchase. Do the BJP and Congress not see any scam or irregularity in this? Will the BJP central government order a CBI-ED investigation into this?" the post read, highlighting the issue as a potential scam.

As of now, there has been no official response from the Uttar Pradesh government or the BJP regarding the allegations made by the AAP.

CBI Raids Former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's Residence



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Wednesday revealed that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) conducted searches at his residences in Raipur and Bhilai ahead of his scheduled visit to New Delhi for a Congress meeting. The CBI also raided the homes of a senior police officer and a close associate of Baghel, although the agency has not disclosed specific details about the ongoing investigation.

Sources suggest that the raids are related to the Mahadev online betting app scam, which has been under scrutiny for its alleged illegal operations. Baghel's office issued a statement on social media, noting that the searches took place just before his planned departure to attend a meeting of the "Drafting Committee" for the upcoming All India Congress Committee (AICC) meeting in Ahmedabad on April 8-9.

In addition to Baghel's residences, the CBI also targeted the premises of other Congress leaders and police officials in Raipur and Durg districts, accord-

ing to sources. The CBI's silence on the details of the investigation has fueled further speculation about the timing and motivations behind the raids.

Reacting to the searches, State Congress communication wing head Sushil Anand Shukla accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of using central agencies to target political opponents. "Ever since Bhupesh Baghel became the party in-charge of Punjab, the BJP has been scared. First, the Enforcement Directorate raided his residence, and now the CBI has been sent. This is a clear sign of BJP's fear," Shukla said. He claimed that when the BJP fails in political battles, it resorts to misusing agencies to suppress its rivals.

Shukla also pointed out that earlier, the CBI had filed a case against Baghel related to an alleged sleaze CD incident, but the court recently discharged him of all charges. The Chhattisgarh government had previously handed over 70 cases linked to the Mahadev scam to the CBI. Recently, the Enforcement Directorate had also raided Baghel's residence in connection with an alleged liquor scam.

Indian Army and Assam Rifles Conduct Major Crackdown on Illegal Arms in Manipur

TPN Correspondent | Manipur

In a significant operation against illegal arms trafficking, the Indian Army and Assam Rifles, under the command of the Spear Corps, conducted a series of intelligence-based joint operations across five districts in riot-hit Manipur between March 22 and March 25, 2025. The operations, which were carried out in coordination with the Manipur Police, CRPF, BSF, and Indo-Tibetan Border Police, led to the recovery of 32 weapons, ammunition, and various war-like materials.

The multi-agency operations targeted districts including Kakching, Imphal West, Imphal East, Senapati, and Bishnupur. All recovered items were handed over to the Manipur Police for further investigation. According to sources, the operation began in Kakching district on March 22, where security forces seized an improvised mortar, a .303 rifle, a modified carbine machine gun, two single-barrel rifles, and additional ammunition and war materials. In Senapati district, four bolt-action rifles were seized, while in Imphal East, two single-barrel rifles and two improvised mortars were recovered.

The following day, March 23, saw further successes, with the Army recovering one INSAS rifle, one .303 rifle, and one self-loading rifle (SLR) from Phaikot in Senapati. Assam Rifles also recovered a 2-inch mortar and a 0.32mm pistol in Imphal East. On March 24, operations continued, and the Army seized a .22 rifle, a 12-bore double-barrel rifle, four 51mm mortars, and a 9mm pistol in Imphal East. In Bishnupur district, security forces recovered an AK-47, a .303 rifle, two modified rifles, and more improvised mortars.

These operations come after Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla's March 6 deadline for individuals to voluntarily surrender illegally held arms. As part of the initiative, over 300 firearms were surrendered by the public during the seven-day period, mainly from the valley districts.

Since the onset of ethnic clashes in May 2023, which have claimed over 250 lives, the state has been in turmoil. The central government imposed President's Rule in February 2025, following the resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh. The state assembly remains in suspended animation amid the unrest.



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.



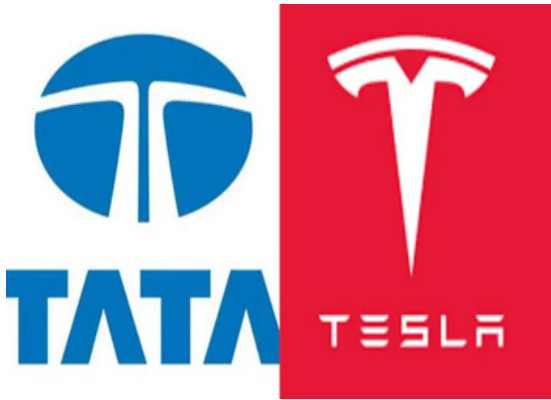
Tata Group Now Tesla's Global Supplier, Eyes Role In India Expansion

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



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

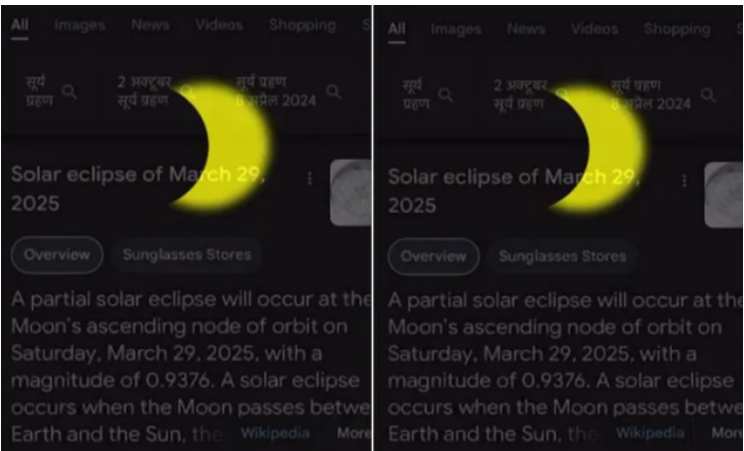
CNG in the commercial sector, coupled with growing environmental awareness and government incentives, has contributed to the decrease in traditional fuel consumption.

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 Chakravathy 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

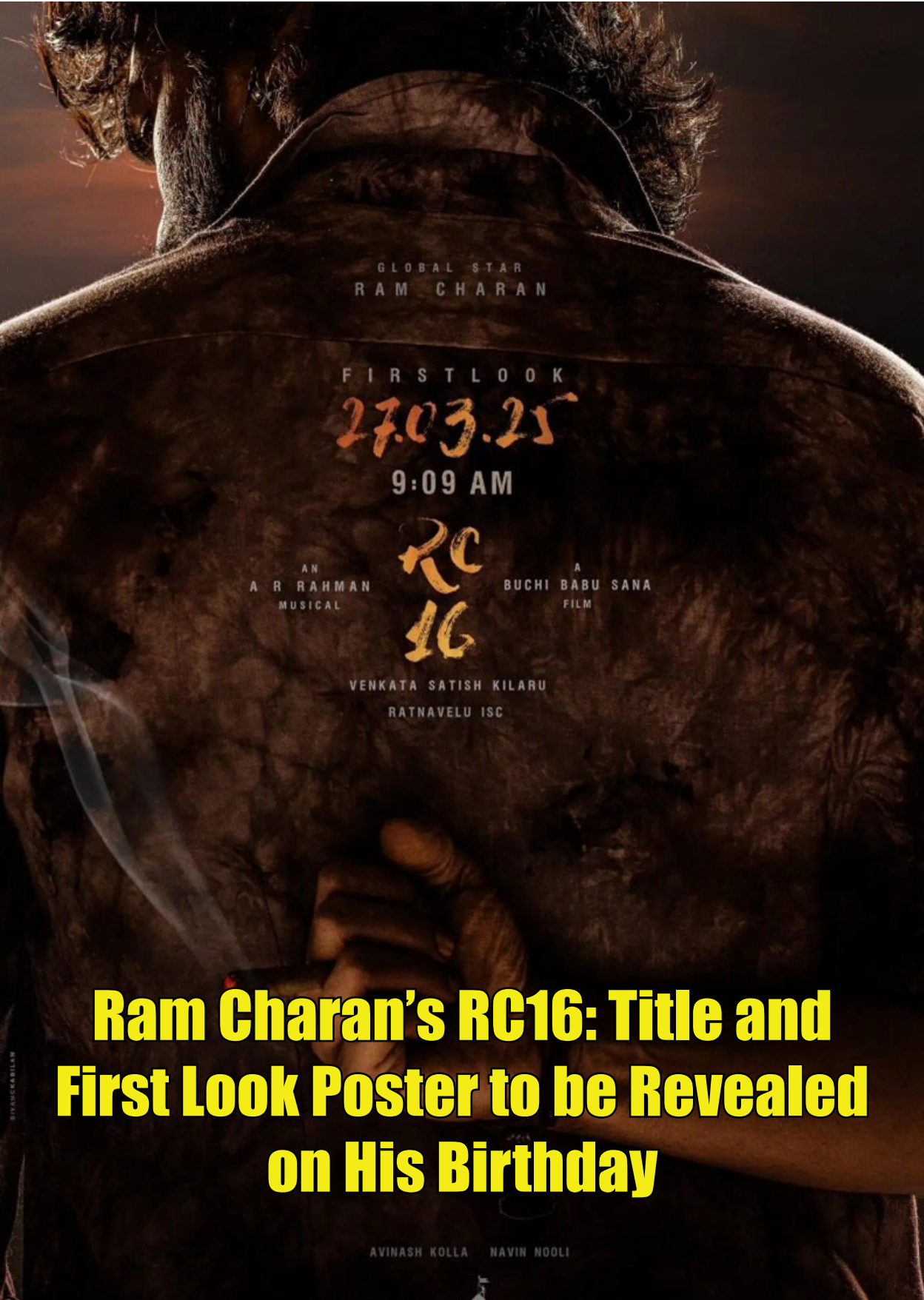


Delhi Capitals pulled off a thrilling one-wicket victory over Lucknow Super Giants in their IPL 2025 clash on Monday, thanks to an explosive 66-run knock from Ashutosh Sharma. However, the post-match focus shifted to an intense conversation between LSG captain Rishabh Pant, head coach Justin Langer,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

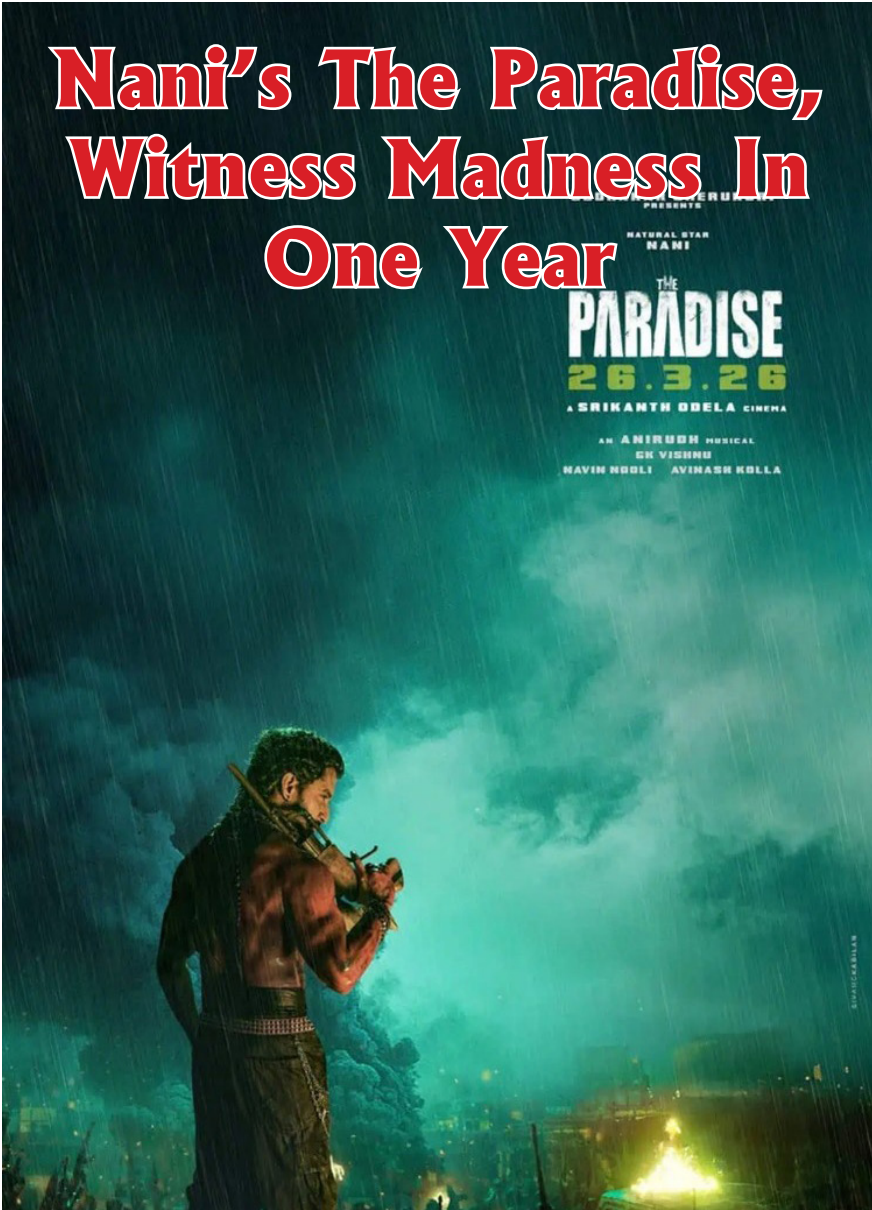
der wraps, the news of Keerthy landing a role alongside Ranbir Kapoor has already stirred excitement. Securing a project with such a prominent Bollywood star is a significant achievement, and many are applauding Keerthy's resilience in continu-

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.