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## Bengaluru Introduces 7-Minute ‘Drone Deliveries’

However, coordination with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is required for operations near their premises. The drone, named Skye Ship One, is designed for high-capacity operations and can carry up to 10 kg per trip. Upon reaching its destination, it lowers to 20 metres and uses the Skye Winch system to deliver packages to designated drop zones. Skye Air’s customers include major logistics players such as Bluedart, DTDC, Shiprocket, and Ecom Express. The company initially focused on essential product deliveries in Himachal Pradesh and now plans to expand to food delivery services. If the Bengaluru launch proves successful, Skye Air intends to extend services to Bannerghatta Road, Kumar added.

## Earthquake Death Toll in Myanmar Rises to 1,644

TPN Correspondent | Myanmar

The powerful earthquake that struck Myanmar on Friday has led to a tragic death toll of at least 1,644, with more than 2,000 people suffering serious injuries. The natural disaster has caused widespread destruction across the country, with hundreds of buildings reduced to rubble. Rescue operations are ongoing as emergency personnel and volunteers race against time to save those still trapped under collapsed structures. Reports suggest that several remote areas remain inaccessible, hindering rescue efforts and communication. Officials have expressed concerns that the death toll may continue to rise as search operations progress. Authorities have made urgent appeals for international assistance to support rescue and relief efforts. The scale of devastation has overwhelmed local resources, with emergency response teams struggling to provide adequate medical care and shelter to the thousands affected. Communication networks have been severely disrupted, further complicating rescue operations. The lack of connectivity is particularly impacting remote regions, where relief workers are finding it difficult to reach those in desperate need of aid. The earthquake has left entire communities devastated, with many families losing their homes and loved ones. Relief organizations are working to provide food, water, medical aid, and temporary shelter to those affected. However, the extent of the damage is proving to be a significant challenge. Officials have warned that the final toll could be much higher as many areas remain unaccounted for. As search and rescue teams continue their efforts, the international community is being urged to step forward with resources and assistance. Myanmar’s government has declared a state of emergency and is coordinating with humanitarian agencies to deliver relief supplies to the worst-hit regions.

## ‘X Corp’s Plea Misconceived and Contrary to Law’: Union Government

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Union government has told the Karnataka High Court that X Corp’s plea challenging the legality of blocking orders under Section 79(3)(b) of the Information Technology Act, 2000, is misconceived and contrary to law. It argued that blocking orders can only be issued under Section 69A of the IT Act, which allows the government to restrict access to information in the interest of national security, public order, and other concerns.

According to the government, X Corp has erroneously conflated “blocking orders” under Section 69A with “notices” under Section 79(3)(b). Section 69A explicitly grants the Centre the authority to block content, while Section 79 primarily governs safe harbor protections for intermediaries, subject to compliance with takedown notices.

The Centre also contested X

Corp’s request to restrain the government from taking action over its non-participation in the Censorship (Sahyog) Portal. It defended the requirement for digital platforms to designate nodal officers and comply with content moderation directives, citing legal provisions under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

The government backed its arguments with cybercrime data, revealing a surge in complaints reported to the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C). Complaints rose from 2.55 lakh in 2020 to 22.68 lakh in 2024, marking a 401% increase. Officials asserted that content-blocking measures are essential to address unlawful online activities. With X Corp’s counsel seeking time to review the objections, Justice M. Nagaprasanna adjourned the hearing to April 3.

# House Panel Ready to Address Governor’s Concerns Over GBGB Bill: MLA Rizwan Arshad

- Committee prepared to provide clarifications requested by the Governor
- Concerns over Metropolitan Planning and BBMP division addressed
- Bill aims at enhancing administrative efficiency in Bengaluru

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Rizwan Arshad, MLA and head of the Select Legislative Committee reviewing the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill (GBGB), has stated that the Governor’s request for clarifications should not be viewed as a rejection of the Bill. Speaking to the media, Arshad clarified that the Governor sought specific explanations rather than raising fundamental constitutional objections.

Addressing concerns related to the 74th Amendment, Arshad mentioned that “No exact point

of the Act was raised.” Dismissing allegations of constitutional flaws, he emphasized the committee’s commitment to refining the Bill as needed.

Arshad also responded to concerns surrounding the proposed Metropolitan Planning, a concept initially introduced by the Congress government. “Metropolitan Planning was proposed when Congress was in power. We will consider all aspects of it moving forward,” he stated.

The division of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) remains a contentious



issue, with critics comparing it to the failed trifurcation of the Delhi civic body. However, Arshad defended the decision, asserting that “Delhi civic body’s trifurcation failed due to unequal revenue distribution. In contrast, we’ve carefully accounted for that, ensuring a balanced approach for Bengaluru’s future.”

He reiterated that Bengaluru must be divided for administrative efficiency and affirmed that all objections have been duly considered. “We are fully prepared to provide all clarifications. There is no cause for alarm,” Arshad concluded, reaffirming the state government’s commitment to addressing the Governor’s concerns.

## FIR Filed Against Five in Plot to Kill MLC Rajendra

TPN Correspondent | Tumakuru

The Kyathasandra police have registered an FIR against five individuals, including history-sheetser Somu, following a complaint by Rajendra, son of Karnataka Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna.

The other accused—Bharat, Amit, Gunda, and Yatish—allegedly have criminal backgrounds and will be secured for questioning soon, police officials stated.

Rajendra approached Tumakuru SP Ashok KV, claiming that ‘unidentified’ persons had given ‘supari’ to assassinate him. The SP directed the case to Kyathasandra police, as the



minister’s residence falls under their jurisdiction. Sections 109, 329(4), 61(2), 190, and 109 of the BNS have been invoked in the case.

Rajendra alleged that he became aware of the murder

plot in January 2025 through an 18-minute audio recording featuring a conversation between a woman and a boy. However, he delayed lodging a complaint, initially dismissing it as a joke. “I later realized the threat was real and decided to report it,” Rajendra said.

According to Rajendra, the accused allegedly attempted to install a GPS tracker in his car. He further claimed that out of the total ₹70 lakh ‘supari’ amount, ₹5 lakh had already been paid.

“I don’t know why they targeted me. The names of Soma and Bharat are mentioned in the audio, but I am not personally familiar with them,” he

added.

SP Ashok KV confirmed that Rajendra had not yet provided the alleged audio evidence but assured that the investigation would verify the background of the murder plot.

“We were not aware of this matter until Rajendra informed us. Adequate security is already in place for the minister and MLC, and it will be further tightened,” he stated.

Rajendra clarified that this case is unrelated to the ongoing CID investigation into the alleged honey-trap attempt on his father, Minister Rajanna. The police are now probing the financial and criminal aspects of the ‘supari’ deal.

## Karnataka Tries New Methods to Keep Elephants at Bay

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

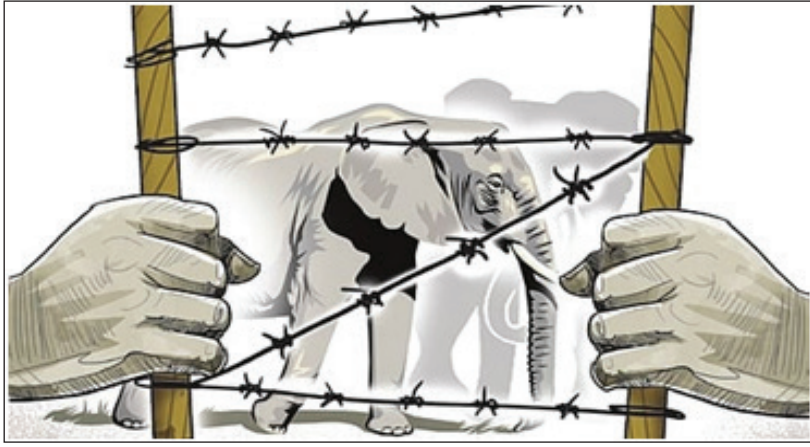
Karnataka’s forest department has been experimenting with various strategies to mitigate man-elephant conflicts, drawing attention from other states seeking to adopt its innovative methods. With over 6,400 elephants, Karnataka houses the largest elephant population in India, and human-wildlife conflicts continue to rise. So far this year, 36 people have died due to conflicts, compared to 43 last year and 50 the year before.

To address the issue, the department has implemented a combination of traditional and modern techniques. Measures include elephant-proof trenches (EPT), honey bee-red chilli rope fences, solar fencing, special concrete walls, rail barricades, barbed wire, and mobile technology-enabled smart

fences.

Additionally, radio collars are fitted on herd leaders and lone tuskers to monitor their movements, with alerts being sent to villagers and coffee estate owners about nearby elephant activity. Recently, a new AI-enabled deterrent device was developed by a Hosur-based company and showcased at the Bengaluru Tech Summit. The device, mounted on trees or poles, uses sensors to detect approaching elephants and emit various sounds such as crackers, buzzing bees, loud sirens, and human shouts to scare them away.

After successful trials at MM Hills, the device is now being tested in Hassan, Ramanganara, and Madikeri. Inspired by Jim Corbett National Park, Karnataka foresters have also installed high-resolution AI cameras along the Ramanaga-



ra River and hilly areas to detect elephants, tigers, leopards, and humans, providing alerts to forest staff.

Another approach, called Garuda, involves installing AI sensors on camera traps along the outer boundaries of the Nagarhole Tiger Reserve. This method, praised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Mann Ki Baat address, aims to improve monitoring and con-

flict prevention.

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Kumar Pushkar stated that several states, including Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, and Madhya Pradesh, are keen to learn from Karnataka’s experiences. Pushkar emphasized that the department is continually exploring the best technological solutions to mitigate conflicts.

# It’s Not the Bill, but Will, That Can Save Namma Bengaluru

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, 2024, recently passed by the Assembly and Council, is now awaiting the Governor’s assent. The bill seeks to address Bengaluru’s growing urban challenges by establishing up to seven city corporations under a Greater Bengaluru Authority. However, the Governor has sent it back, recommending wider consultations with civic organisations and stakeholders.

The bill envisions a comprehensive structure for effective governance, with the chief

minister as the ex-officio chairperson of the authority. Other members will include various ministers, officials from urban development bodies, and representatives from the police, transport, and fire services. While the bill aims to enhance coordination among agencies, critics argue it could become an expensive and cumbersome



administrative exercise.

Despite the promise of improved governance, many believe Bengaluru’s issues stem

from a lack of political will rather than inadequate structures. Critics point out that the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara

Palike (BBMP) failed to manage the city effectively not because of its structure, but due to inefficient policies and poor implementation.

Traffic congestion, for instance, continues to worsen despite road expansion projects. Instead of focusing on stricter enforcement of traffic rules and responsible driving practices, the government has prioritized road construction, which some believe serves financial interests rather than practical solutions.

Supporters of the bill argue that bringing various agencies under one authority could

lead to better coordination and quicker resolution of issues. However, they also acknowledge that streamlining BBMP and related agencies could have achieved similar results without restructuring.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill will depend on whether it is implemented with genuine intent and scientific approach. Without adequate consultations and a commitment to addressing Bengaluru’s core problems, the city’s challenges may continue to grow despite the bill’s ambitious framework.



# Yatnal’s Expulsion Harmful to BJP: Ramesh Jarkiholi

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A faction of disgruntled BJP legislators, led by MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi, has urged the party’s top leadership to reconsider the expulsion of Basangouda Patil Yatnal. The group contends that the BJP Disciplinary Committee’s decision to expel Yatnal could harm the party’s electoral prospects in North Karnataka. Following a meeting of the rebel faction in Bengaluru on Saturday, Jarkiholi emphasized that the party stands to suffer due to Yatnal’s removal. He highlighted Yatnal’s influence and stature within the party as a significant factor for the leadership to consider.



“We (disgruntled MLAs) are confident that the party leadership will revoke the order of his expulsion.

He has been one of the most influential leaders in the party who can make a difference. I am sure that our appeal to the party will be considered seriously,” Jarkiholi stated. Jarkiholi also criticized the BJP’s decision to expel Yatnal as overly harsh and made in haste. He argued that Yatnal’s popularity and influence over a large section of the population should have been taken into account before any drastic measures were implemented. The rebel legislators have warned that Yatnal’s absence could adversely impact the BJP’s strength and prospects in the North Karnataka region.

## BJP High Command Issues Notices to Two MLAs: Jagadish Shettar Reveals Truth

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The BJP high command has initiated disciplinary action against Vijayapura MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal for his open criticism of BJP leaders. The BJP Central Disciplinary Committee has expelled him from the party for six years. Responding to the situation, former Chief Minister and MP Jagadish Shettar stated that the high command may consider revoking Yatnal’s expulsion if necessary. Speaking to reporters in Hubballi, Shettar remarked, “My wish is that everyone should go together. Notices have also been given to MLAs S.T. Somashekar and Shivaram Hebbar. Action will be taken as soon as possible. The high command will take intelligent steps at the appropriate time.” Shettar emphasized the importance of unity within the BJP, especially as the party aims to strengthen its presence in states like Bihar, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. He



asserted that BJP’s good governance requires collective effort and cohesion. Commenting on the ongoing honeytrap controversy in the state, Shettar criticized Congress leaders for their silence on the issue. He suggested that attempts are being made to cover up the scandal, warning that the truth, if revealed, could destabilize the state government. He also mocked the Congress government by stating, “The government is not alive in the state. The state government is dead. All that remains is to do a post-mortem examination.” Jagadish Shettar’s statements have added a new dimension to the ongoing political turmoil within Karnataka’s BJP and Congress factions.

## BJP Sent Wrong Message to Lingayat Community by Expelling Yatnal: Shivraj Tangadigi



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Minister Shivaraj Tangadigi has strongly criticized the BJP’s decision to expel Vijayapura MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal from the party, stating that it has sent a negative message to the Lingayat community. According to Tangadigi, Yatnal has been a prominent leader in North Karnataka, where the Lingayat community holds significant influence. “Yatnal was criticizing the Congress party and its leaders because he was in the BJP. He did not say anything personally against BJP leaders. He is a senior leader and was a minister at the Centre before Vijayendra entered politics,” Tangadigi remarked. He further emphasized that Yatnal’s popularity among the Lingayat community, which is the largest in North Karnataka, should have been considered before taking such a drastic step. “By expelling him, the BJP has sent a bad message to that community,” Tangadigi added. The BJP’s decision to expel Yatnal for six years, issued by the party’s Central Disciplinary Committee, has sparked reactions from various leaders. The move is now being scrutinized for its potential impact on the party’s prospects in Karnataka, particularly within the Lingayat community.

## BJP to Protest Until Speaker UT Khader Withdraws MLAs' Suspension: Vijayendra

- **BJP condemns suspension of 18 MLAs as unconstitutional**
- **Party to stage protest at Vidhana Soudha**
- **Decision taken in BJP leaders' meeting**

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka



BJP Karnataka President BY Vijayendra has announced that the party will continue its protest until Assembly Speaker UT Khader revokes the suspension of 18 BJP MLAs. Addressing the media after a key meeting at the BJP central office, Vijayendra strongly criticized the Speaker’s decision, calling it unconstitutional. The suspension, imposed on the last day of the budget session, has sparked outrage within the BJP. Vijayendra stated that the party views this action as an attack on democracy and an attempt to silence the opposition. He further added that the Speaker’s move was unprecedented and politically motivated.

In response, the BJP has decided to launch a protest demanding justice for the suspended MLAs. A resolution was passed in the meeting, instructing all BJP MLAs and Legislative Council members to stage a united demonstration. The protest will take place in front of the statue of Kengal Hanumanthiah on the Vidhana Soudha premises. Vijayendra reaffirmed that the BJP will not remain silent on this issue and will fight against what he termed an undemocratic decision. The party is determined to continue its agitation until the suspension is withdrawn.

## Satish Jarkiholi Dismisses Speculations Over Meeting Kumaraswamy

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Karnataka Minister Satish Jarkiholi has dismissed speculations surrounding his recent meeting with Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, stating that their interactions are nothing out of the ordinary. Speaking to the media, he emphasized that he has been meeting Kumaraswamy for the past thirty years and that there was no political motive behind their latest conversation. “There is no need to give any special meaning to my meeting with Kumaraswamy. I have already explained everything yesterday. Our meetings are not unusual, and there is no hidden agenda behind them,” Jarkiholi stated firmly. His remarks come at a time when political circles are rife with speculation about shifting alliances and internal developments in Karnataka. Given Kumaraswamy’s crucial role in the JD(S)-BJP alliance, many had interpreted the meeting as a sign of potential political realignments. However, Jarkiholi sought to put an end to such assumptions. When asked about the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) presidency, Jarkiholi deflected questions on whether there would be a leadership change. He maintained that the current president, D.K. Shivakumar, is continuing his

responsibilities and that any decision on his tenure lies beyond his control.



“There is already a KPCC president, and he is doing his job. Whether he continues for a full term or not is something I cannot comment on,” he said. His comments come amid increasing discussions within the Congress party regarding leadership restructuring ahead of the upcoming elections. While some factions within the party believe a change in KPCC leadership could strengthen the party’s prospects, others argue that Shivakumar should complete his full tenure. Jarkiholi’s clarification aims to put an end to unnecessary speculation regarding his political moves. However, in Karnataka’s dynamic political landscape, every development continues to be closely observed by both party leaders and political analysts.

## Congress MLA RV Deshpande Criticizes Free Schemes, Calls Them Dangerous

TPN Correspondent | Uttara Kannada

Congress MLA and Chairman of the Karnataka State Administrative Reforms Commission, RV Deshpande, has voiced his opposition to the Karnataka Congress government’s free guarantee schemes. He stated that providing everything for free is a dangerous policy and suggested that a fee should be charged for every public service. Speaking at the inauguration of the newly built Assistant Regional Transport Officers’ Office in Ambewadi, Dandeli, Uttara Kannada district, Deshpande used the Shakti scheme as an example to highlight his concerns. “Nothing should be given to people for free. A price must be fixed for every service. Women are currently benefiting from free bus travel under the Shakti Yojana, and

now there is a demand to extend it to men as well. How will transport corporations survive if everything is given for free?” he questioned. Opposition parties have repeatedly criticized the Karnataka government’s free schemes, arguing that they are placing a heavy financial burden on the state. Now, Deshpande’s remarks have added weight to these concerns, with several Congress leaders also acknowledging the fiscal challenges posed by such schemes.



Deshpande shared details of the Ambewadi program on Facebook, along with pictures from the event. He noted the presence of Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, the Municipal Council President, Vice President, Block Congress President, Transport Department officials, and members of the public during the inauguration.

# Union Minister V Somanna Avoids Comment on Yatnal’s Expulsion

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Union Minister V Somanna has remained cautious while responding to the recent expulsion of Vijayapura MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal from the BJP. Speaking to the media, Somanna refrained from making direct remarks on the decision made by the BJP Central Disciplinary Committee. When asked about Yatnal’s expulsion, Somanna stated, “Let us stand in a sacred place and speak only good words, let us give priority to whatever issue we need.” His words reflect an approach aimed at maintaining harmony and focusing on constructive issues rather than engaging in controversies. Somanna, who is now serving as



a minister in the central government, acknowledged the situation as a setback for Yatnal. However, he suggested that the episode serves as a valuable lesson, remarking, “It is a lesson for us to keep our mouths shut.” The Union Minister’s comments indicate a preference for re-

straint and careful speech within the party’s leadership. Reaffirming his allegiance to former Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa, Somanna subtly highlighted the importance of leadership unity and discipline within the BJP. His remarks also reflect the central leadership’s attempt to handle the repercussions of Yatnal’s expulsion with composure and caution. The decision to expel Basangouda Patil Yatnal has stirred reactions across Karnataka’s political landscape, particularly among the Lingayat community where Yatnal holds significant influence. Somanna’s measured response hints at the BJP’s effort to maintain unity while managing internal differences.



# DK Shivakumar Praises Bengaluru’s Growth Blue print

**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
Bengaluru’s civic administration, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), has unveiled its budget for 2025, allocating a massive ₹19,930 crore for the city’s development. Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar expressed his satisfaction with the budget, stating that it aligns with the vision of trans-

forming Bengaluru into a global city. Shivakumar highlighted that the budget is designed to support the “Brand Bengaluru” initiative and ensure comprehensive infrastructural development. He emphasized that the government is committed to bringing Bengaluru back on the path of growth and providing world-class infrastructure. Calling it a “blueprint for the city’s progress,” he commend-

ed the BBMP’s efforts in prioritizing key areas such as road infrastructure, drainage systems, waste management, and urban mobility. The budget aims to address Bengaluru’s pressing civic issues while also focusing on long-term growth. Specific allocations have been made for improving public transport, developing flyovers and underpasses to ease traffic congestion, upgrading drainage net-

works to prevent flooding, and enhancing green spaces across the city. Additionally, funds have been designated for better waste management solutions, including new waste processing plants. The BBMP’s financial plan also includes measures to boost digital governance, improve healthcare facilities, and strengthen public amenities. Shivakumar reiterated that the government is



determined to make Bengaluru a global urban hub by ensuring that infrastructure and essential services meet international standards. With this substantial budget, the Karnataka

government aims to accelerate Bengaluru’s development, ensuring that the city remains a thriving economic and technological powerhouse in the coming years.

## Bumper Veggie Crop Lowers Prices, But Fruits and Flowers Get Costlier

**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
A surplus vegetable harvest in Bengaluru, following last year’s good monsoon, has led to an oversupply, bringing down prices. However, fruits and flowers have seen a sharp increase in cost due to lower yields and rising demand during the festive and wedding seasons. According to wholesalers and vendors, vegetable prices remain stable and are on a downward trend.



ing vegetables more affordable for consumers. In contrast, fruit prices have surged due to lower production and high demand during festivals like Ugadi and Ram Navami. Mangoes, in particular, have become expensive as unseasonal rains affected their flowering stage, reducing supply. Bananas, grapes, and apples have also seen price hikes, with wholesalers attributing the rise to a lack of supply from key growing regions. Many traders predict that fruit prices may remain high until the seasonal supply stabilizes. Flowers, which are in high demand for religious events and weddings, have also seen prices nearly double. Jasmine

and marigold, essential for festive decorations, have become costlier as supply struggles to keep up. Radha, a flower vendor in Malleswaram, mentioned that wholesale flower rates have skyrocketed, directly impacting retail prices. While vegetable prices are expected to remain low in the coming weeks, fruit and flower prices may stay high until supply conditions improve. Many traders believe that relief in these segments may only come with better weather and a stronger monsoon in the upcoming season. For now, Bengaluru consumers can enjoy affordable vegetables while preparing for continued high costs of fruits and flowers.

## Bengaluru Engineer’s Organ Donation Saves Six Lives

**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
A single mother’s courageous decision to donate her son’s organs after his tragic road accident has helped save six lives. Rakesh Kumar S, a 33-year-old software engineer from Rajaji Nagar, met with a fatal accident on March 15 when his two-wheeler skidded, leaving him with severe head and facial injuries. Passersby rushed him to a nearby hospital, but he never regained consciousness.



His mother, Rekha Rao, who had already suffered the loss of her husband 25 years ago, faced another devastating blow. However, in the midst of her grief, she made a life-changing decision. “Despite my pain, I wanted to do something meaningful. Knowing that Rakesh’s organs have given others a second chance at life brings me some comfort,” she said. On March 17, doctors declared Rakesh brain dead, and organ donation coordinators approached the family. After careful consideration, Rekha agreed to donate his organs, ensuring that her son’s legacy lived on.

His liver and two kidneys were successfully transplanted at Apollo Hospitals, while his heart valves and corneas were preserved for future procedures. Medical professionals hailed the family’s generosity, emphasizing the urgent need for more awareness about organ donation. “One donor can change multiple lives, and Rekha’s brave decision is truly inspiring,” said a transplant coordinator. Rakesh’s friends and colleagues remember him as a compassionate and hardworking individual. His close friend Anil, whom he was supposed to meet on the day of the acci-

dent, shared, “He was always ready to help others. Even in his passing, he has given so much.” The tragedy highlights the importance of road safety and responsible driving, as well as the critical need for organ donation awareness. Medical experts urge more families to consider organ donation in such circumstances, as it offers hope to countless patients in need. While Rekha mourns her son’s loss, she finds solace in the fact that Rakesh’s generosity will continue to impact lives, keeping his spirit alive through those he saved.

## Bengaluru Film’s Director Arrested for ₹44.8 Crore GST Evasion

**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
The Commercial Taxes Department (South Zone), Bengaluru, has uncovered a major Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion case, leading to the arrest of a lead ingot manufacturing firm’s director. The accused company, M/s Lawraga Metals Private Limited, allegedly availed fraudulent Input Tax Credit (ITC) worth ₹44.83 crore using fake invoices. Investigations revealed that

the company, in collusion with bogus suppliers, systematically manipulated financial transactions. Payments were transferred to shell bank accounts, posing as legitimate suppliers. However, no actual goods were supplied, confirming the fraudulent nature of these transactions. Authorities suspect that the funds were rerouted through multiple hawala channels before returning to the accused

firm. The company’s turnover impact due to this fraudulent activity is estimated at ₹250 crore. Mukund Agarwal, the firm’s director, was arrested and presented before the Special Court for Economic Offences. The court remanded him to judicial custody until April 9, 2025. According to the department, this is the first instance of such a sophisticated GST fraud being uncovered in Karnataka. Further investigations are

underway to identify other entities involved in similar fraudulent activities. The operation was conducted under the leadership of Vipul Bansal, Commissioner of Commercial Taxes, and supervised by Additional Commissioner Chandrashekara Nayak L. Authorities have assured continued efforts to curb such tax frauds and bring culprits to justice.



## BBMP Garbage Truck Kills 8-Year-Old in Bengaluru, Triggers Public Outrage

**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
A tragic accident on Thanisandra Main Road claimed the life of eight-year-old Ayman after a speeding BBMP garbage truck crashed into the bike he was riding pillion on with his father, Abdul Khader. The incident, which occurred around noon on Saturday, sparked widespread outrage, with local residents attacking the truck driver and setting the vehicle on fire. Ayman and his father were traveling from their home

in Saraipalya to a madrasa in Hegde Nagar, reportedly for his admission, when the accident took place. Eyewitnesses stated that the garbage truck, moving at high speed, rammed into their bike from behind, throwing both father and son onto the road. While Abdul Khader sustained injuries, Ayman was fatally run over by the truck. The horrific nature of the accident led to immediate anger among bystanders, who caught the driver and thrashed him before setting the truck ablaze.



The police arrived at the scene shortly after, dispersing

the enraged crowd and taking the injured driver into custo-

dy. Traffic was disrupted for hours as officials worked to control the situation. Authorities later sent Ayman’s body for post-mortem examination while his father was admitted to a nearby hospital for treatment. Local residents voiced their frustration over reckless driving by BBMP garbage truck drivers, alleging that such incidents have become increasingly common. “These trucks drive rashly without regard for traffic rules, putting lives at risk daily,” said a resident of the area.

Protesters demanded stricter regulation and accountability for garbage truck drivers to prevent further tragedies. The police have registered a case and are investigating the driver’s negligence. Meanwhile, BBMP officials have assured the public that necessary action will be taken against those responsible. Ayman’s untimely death has once again highlighted the issue of road safety in Bengaluru, particularly concerning heavy vehicles operating in residential areas.



# Drone Delivery Service Arrives in Bengaluru

**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
Bengaluru has finally launched its commercial drone delivery service, with operations currently available in Konankunte and Kanakapura Road areas. This comes nearly three years after hospitals in the city proposed using drones to transport medicines and diagnostic samples to circumvent the city’s notorious traffic. Ankit Kumar, CEO of Skye Air, a Delhi-based hyperlocal drone delivery network, confirmed the launch and highlighted the efficiency of drone deliveries. “Residents can now receive deliveries in just seven minutes,” he said. If successful, the service will be expanded to Bannerghatta Road. Despite being a leading IT hub, Bengaluru was not the first Indian city to im-

plement commercial drone deliveries. Gurugram, known as the Millennium City, pioneered the service, completing its first delivery in Sector 92. Covering a 7.5 km distance in just 3-4 minutes—compared to 15 minutes via road—the initiative saw rapid adoption, achieving one million deliveries in a year. This success paved the way for Bengaluru’s entry into drone logistics. Skye Air determines delivery routes based on demand density and available infrastructure. The company has secured airspace approval to operate drones up to 120 meters above ground in designated corridors, avoiding military installations. Coordination with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is necessary for certain areas. Operations are

managed through Skye Air’s proprietary Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) platform, Skye UTM, introduced in 2023. Unlike traditional air traffic management, this system autonomously monitors and guides drones, ensuring safe and efficient operations within the Skye Tunnel—an invisible air corridor. The drone, named Skye Ship One, is designed for high-capacity logistics, carrying up to 10 kg per trip. Upon reaching its destination, it descends to 20 meters and uses the Skye Winch system to lower the package to a designated drop zone before returning via the same route. Kumar emphasized the environmental benefits, stating that each drone delivery saves approximately 520 grams of



carbon emissions compared to road transport. Skye Air has partnered with logistics firms like Bluedart, DTDC, Shiprocket, and Ecom Express. Initially focused on medical deliveries in Himachal Pradesh, the company now plans to enter the food delivery sector.



## Kerala Faces Acute Water Stress in 12% of Wards

**TPN Correspondent | Kerala**  
A recent study has revealed that nearly 12% of Kerala’s wards are experiencing acute water stress, particularly during the peak summer months from March to May. The worst-affected districts include Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode, and Pathanamthitta, where around 20% of the wards are facing severe water shortages. According to the study, 2,567 out of the state’s 21,908 wards are struggling with water scarcity. This is attributed to a significant rise in daily water consumption compared to previous years, while the num-

ber of reliable water sources remains insufficient. This is the first-ever ward-wise water stress assessment in Kerala, initiated by the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment. The research was conducted jointly by the Institute for Climate Change Studies, Kerala Forest Research Institute, and the Centre for Water Resources Development and Management. The study examined water consumption patterns, climate trends, and community-level usage, incorporating feedback from residents. Researchers found that increased demand and declining sources

have exacerbated water shortages, making urgent intervention necessary. The findings highlight the need for a well-planned approach to manage water stress. The study recommends implementing strategic measures in the worst-affected areas to ensure better water availability in the future. With climate change and urbanization exerting pressure on water resources, experts emphasize the importance of conservation efforts, improved water management strategies, and sustainable practices to address the growing crisis in Kerala.

## “Chhattisgarh Encounter: 16 Maoists Killed”

**TPN Correspondent | Chhattisgarh**  
In a significant anti-Maoist operation, security forces neutralized 16 Maoists in Sukma, Chhattisgarh, marking one of the largest encounters in the region. The joint operation was carried out by the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), leading to the recovery of a substantial cache of automatic weapons. Sukma, one of the worst-affected districts in Chhattisgarh, has long been a hotspot for Maoist activities, witnessing multiple attacks on security personnel over the years. The latest operation is being hailed as a decisive success in the ongoing battle against Maoist insurgency. Union Home Minister Amit Shah praised the security forces for their efforts, stating that the operation was another major blow to Naxalism. He reiterated the government’s strong stance against Maoist violence and emphasized its commitment to eradicating the insurgency completely by March 31, 2026. “Another strike on Naxalism! Our security agencies have neutralized 16 Naxalites and recovered a massive cache of automatic weapons in an operation in Sukma. Under the leadership of Prime Minister



Narendra Modi Ji, we are resolved to eradicate Naxalism before the 31st of March 2026,” Mr. Shah posted on X. The security forces have been intensifying their efforts in Maoist-dominated regions, employing advanced tactics and intelligence-led operations to counter insurgent activities. The Sukma encounter is part of a broader strategy aimed at dismantling Maoist strongholds and ensuring peace in affected regions. Officials have described the encounter as one of the biggest in recent years, highlighting the effectiveness of coordinated intelligence and swift action. The recovered weapons will be analyzed to gain further insights into Mao-

ist operations in the region. Experts believe that sustained pressure from security forces, combined with development initiatives and rehabilitation programs, will be key in tackling the Maoist insurgency in the long run. While encounters like the one in Sukma serve as major setbacks for Maoists, authorities stress that long-term solutions should focus on socio-economic development and addressing grievances of affected communities. As the government continues its push against Naxalism, security operations in Maoist-infested regions are expected to intensify further, with a goal of bringing lasting peace and stability to the region.

## Mumbai Braces for Rain, Thunderstorms Monday

**TPN Correspondent | Mumbai**  
Mumbai is set to experience a shift in weather conditions as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasts light drizzles and thunderstorms from Monday, April 1, offering some respite from the rising summer heat. While no weather warning has been issued for Mumbai, the IMD has sounded a yellow alert for Thane and Raigad, predicting thunderstorms accompanied by lightning, moderate rainfall, and gusty winds reaching speeds of 30-40 km/h in isolated areas. On Friday, weather data from the IMD showed that Mumbai’s Santacruz observatory recorded a maximum temperature of 33.6°C, while the Colaba coastal observatory registered 31°C. However, temperatures are expected to climb further, likely crossing 36°C over the weekend before the anticipated rainfall



provides some cooling. Meteorologists suggest that while the weekend will remain mostly clear, Mumbai will experience cloudy skies with light drizzles on Monday, followed by thunderstorms and rain on Tuesday evening. Meanwhile, the neighboring districts of Thane and Raigad are expected to receive more intense rainfall during this period, prompting the IMD to issue weather alerts across multiple districts in Maharashtra. Despite being uncommon, pre-monsoon showers are not entirely rare in Mumbai. The city has recorded similar weather patterns in previous years, with March 2023

seeing the highest-ever rainfall for the month at 17 mm. Prior to this, the Santacruz observatory logged 10 mm of rainfall in March 2016 and 13 mm in March 2015. While the upcoming showers will bring momentary relief, they will also contribute to a temporary dip in maximum temperatures, which are expected to stabilize at around 33°C after April 2. Residents can anticipate a break from the heat as cloudy skies and intermittent rain create cooler conditions in the city. The change in weather is a result of evolving climatic patterns, and while summer rains in Mumbai are not a regular occurrence, they have been observed occasionally over the years. As the city braces for the approaching showers, people can expect fluctuating temperatures, brief spells of rainfall, and the potential for thunderstorms before summer heat returns in full force.

## Haryana Cracks Down on Drug Trade

**TPN Correspondent | Haryana**  
In a major crackdown on repeat drug offenders, the Haryana Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has detained 71 individuals under the Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT-NDPS) Act over the past 60 days. The move is part of a broader effort to curb drug trafficking by targeting habitual offenders who continue to exploit legal loopholes to evade punishment. Senior police officials revealed that dossiers have been prepared for 25 more hardened criminals who are set to be detained within the next four weeks. “Legal formalities are being completed, and these repeat offenders will soon be taken into custody,” a senior officer stated. The PIT-NDPS Act allows authorities to preventively detain individuals for up to a year without trial if they are found to be persistently involved in drug trafficking. This measure is being used to bypass delays caused

by conventional legal processes, which often allow offenders to secure bail and resume illegal activities. Director General of Police and Haryana Narcotics Control Bureau Chief, O P Singh, explained the rationale behind this strict action. “These 71 individuals have collectively been involved in 337 NDPS cases. Many of them have been arrested multiple times but continue trafficking by manipulating the law, particularly by ensuring that the quantities of drugs they carry remain below the commercial threshold. This allows them to get bail easily and avoid long prison sentences,” Singh said. By using the PIT-NDPS Act, the police aim to close this loophole and ensure that repeat offenders are taken off the streets. “Unlike conventional prosecution, which is often delayed or derailed by bail, preventive detention under this act allows us to isolate repeat offenders based on their past behavior,” Singh added. Among the districts with the highest number of detentions,



Fatehabad leads with 11 arrests, followed by Kaithal with 10, and both Faridabad and Rewari recording seven each. The police continue to identify and track habitual drug traffickers across the state. With this aggressive approach, the Haryana government aims to disrupt drug networks and create a deterrent for those involved in the illegal drug trade. The ongoing crackdown is expected to strengthen the state’s fight against narcotics and ensure a stricter legal framework for repeat offenders.



# New Tax Rates, UPI, and GST: Key Changes from April 1, 2025

- New tax slabs with higher exemptions take effect
- Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) to benefit 23 lakh employees
- Stricter UPI security measures to prevent fraud
- GST updates include mandatory multi-factor authentication

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Starting April 1, 2025, several financial and regulatory changes will come into effect, impacting taxpayers, digital payment users, and businesses. These changes include revised income tax slabs, the implementation of the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), updated Unified Payments Interface (UPI) security guidelines, and new Goods and Services Tax (GST) regulations.

## Unified Pension Scheme (UPS)

The Unified Pension Scheme (UPS), introduced in August 2024, will be implemented from April 1, 2025. This scheme aims to provide financial security to over 23 lakh central government employees. Under UPS, employees with at least 25 years of service will receive a pension equivalent to 50% of their last 12 months' average basic salary.

### UPI Security Measures

To enhance security and efficiency in digital transactions, the Nation-

## New Income Tax Slabs and Exemptions

Following the Union Budget 2025, the revised tax slabs announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will be enforced. The new structure provides tax exemptions for individuals earning up to ₹12 lakh per year. Additionally, salaried individuals will receive a standard deduction of ₹75,000, effectively making those earning up to ₹12.75 lakh tax-free.

al Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has mandated new measures for banks and third-party UPI service providers such as PhonePe, Google Pay, and Paytm. Inactive UPI-linked mobile numbers will be phased out automatically. Banks must update their databases using the Mobile Number Revocation List (MNRL) and Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP) on a weekly basis. Users with inactive numbers must update their details before April 1, 2025, to avoid losing UPI access.



### Revised Income Tax Slabs:

Income Range	New Tax Rate
₹0 - ₹4 lakh	No tax
₹4 lakh - ₹8 lakh	5%
₹8 lakh - ₹12 lakh	10%
₹12 lakh - ₹16 lakh	15%
₹16 lakh - ₹20 lakh	20%
₹20 lakh - ₹24 lakh	25%
Above ₹24 lakh	30%

## GST Updates for the New Financial Year

The GST regime will also undergo significant changes, improving security and compliance. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) will become mandatory for all taxpayers accessing the GST portal. E-Way Bills (EWBs) can only be generated for base documents not older than 180 days. GSTR-7 filers (for tax deductions at source) must file returns in sequence and cannot skip months. Promoters and directors must now undergo biometric authentication at a GST Suvidha Kendra. These updates aim to enhance security, prevent tax evasion, and streamline compliance for businesses and taxpayers alike. With these changes coming into effect, individuals and businesses are advised to stay informed and update their financial details accordingly to ensure a smooth transition into the new financial year.

## Delimitation Debate

# A Necessary Reform for Balanced Representation

THE POINT DESK

The delimitation exercise, aimed at re-drawing the parliamentary and assembly constituencies based on population shifts, has been in a state of suspension for five decades. Initially deferred in 1975 and again in 2000, its postponement has been largely attributed to the need for stabilizing population growth. However, with India's demographic landscape evolving significantly since then, the time has come to reconsider the freeze and move towards a fair and updated electoral representation system. Recently, a coalition of southern and regional leaders voiced their opposition to the upcoming 2026 delimitation process, arguing that it would unfairly reduce their representation in Parliament. The meeting in Chennai, convened by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin and attended by leaders from Telangana, Kerala, Punjab, Karnataka, and Odisha, highlighted concerns that states with better population control measures would be penalized under a new seat allocation formula. However, the issue goes beyond a simplistic North vs. South debate.

**The Need for a Balanced Approach**

At the heart of this discussion is a fundamental democratic principle: representation should be proportional to population. The purpose of delimitation is to ensure that every Indian citizen has equal political weight, preventing distortions where some constituencies have vastly different population sizes. While the concerns of southern states are valid—particularly in terms of their economic contributions and progress in social indicators—delimitation should not be viewed as a punishment but as a course correction to reflect demographic realities. Population shifts over the decades have led to an imbalance in representation, with some states having fewer MPs per voter compared to others. Ignoring this would only widen the democratic deficit. Furthermore, the argument that delimitation would reduce the influence of progressive states overlooks the fact that economic weight and development parameters can also be factored into the process. The Centre must work on a multi-pronged approach where both population figures and state development indicators are considered in the seat allocation formula.



## Why Delimitation Should Proceed Without Further Delay

- Reflecting Demographic Reality: India's population dynamics have shifted considerably since the last delimitation. Some states have experienced higher growth, while others have stabilized. Electoral representation should reflect these changes.
- Enhancing Electoral Fairness: A voter in a less populated state should not have disproportionately greater influence than a voter in a high-population state. This imbalance needs rectification for a true representative democracy.
- Strengthening Federalism: Contrary to fears that delimitation would harm federalism, an inclusive and transparent approach can strengthen India's unity. The process should be handled with consultations to address the concerns of all stakeholders.
- Addressing Governance Challenges: A more balanced distribution of seats can ensure better policy-making and governance, particularly in regions experiencing high population growth. More representation means better outreach, policy implementation, and resource allocation.

## Constructive Solutions for Addressing Concerns

**While delimitation is essential, the concerns of southern and smaller states should not be ignored. Several viable alternatives could mitigate the impact while upholding democratic fairness:**

- Weighted Representation: Seats could be allocated not just on population but also based on states' fiscal contribution and development indicators. This would reward states that have managed population growth effectively.
- Strengthening the Rajya Sabha: Increasing the Rajya Sabha's strength and ensuring proportional representation there could offset concerns of parliamentary imbalance. This would allow regional voices to

- remain influential even if Lok Sabha seat distribution changes.
- Expanding Total Parliamentary Seats: Instead of merely redistributing seats among states, India could increase the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha to ensure all states see some level of gain rather than loss. This would be in line with global democracies that have adjusted their legislative strengths over time.

Unilateral Opposition Won't Help, Dialogue Will

Some opposition leaders have framed the delimitation debate as an attempt to marginalize southern states, but such a narrative is over-simplistic and counterproductive. The reality is that fair representation benefits all citizens, and a transparent, consultative approach can ensure that no state feels disadvantaged. Moreover, accusations that the BJP-led NDA government is using delimitation for political gains overlook the fact that delimitation was originally frozen under previous governments. Any attempt to block the process further risks undermining democracy and delaying much-needed reforms. Instead of outright opposition, southern leaders should push for a negotiated framework that ensures their concerns are addressed while also respecting the core principles of democratic representation. Delimitation is an unavoidable necessity in a dynamic democracy like India. While there are concerns that need to be thoughtfully addressed, the larger goal should be to uphold electoral fairness and ensure every voter's voice carries equal weight. A transparent, data-driven approach with stakeholder engagement can make the delimitation exercise an opportunity for strengthening democracy rather than a cause for division. The Centre must take the lead in fostering dialogue and building a consensus-driven solution. Any further delay in delimitation will only deepen existing electoral imbalances, making India's democracy less representative over time. A strong, forward-looking decision is needed—one that embraces change while ensuring fairness for all states.



## Elon Musk's X-xAI Merger

Elon Musk's recent decision to merge X (formerly Twitter) with his artificial intelligence company, xAI, in a \$33 billion all-stock deal has sparked intense debate. The move raises X's valuation to \$45 billion and aligns it with Musk's vision of an AI-driven future. But beyond financial restructuring, the real question is: how does this benefit users?

### The Logic Behind the Deal

Musk has made it clear that he sees the future of social media and artificial intelligence as deeply connected. By integrating xAI's advanced models with X's massive user base of over 600 million, Musk aims to transform the platform into something beyond just a digital town square. He stated that this merger would "unlock immense potential by blending xAI's advanced AI capability and expertise with X's massive reach."

Musk's AI ambitions are not new. xAI, founded in 2022, has already positioned itself as a serious competitor in the AI space, developing sophisticated models and high-speed data centers. X, on the other hand, has undergone drastic changes since Musk's \$44 billion acquisition, including workforce reductions, rebranding, and feature revamps. This merger is expected to streamline operations, making X more efficient and AI-driven.

### How Users Will Benefit

Musk has long spoken about turning X into an "everything app," and this merger could be a crucial step in that direction. Users can expect several AI-powered enhancements:

**Smarter Content Curation:** AI-generated content recommendations will refine user feeds, making engagement more personalized and relevant.

**Improved Moderation:** AI-driven tools could help tackle misinformation and harmful content, ensuring a safer platform.

**Integration with Grok:** xAI's chatbot, Grok, is set to enhance user interactions, offering AI-powered assistance and real-time engagement.

**Expanded Services:** The "everything app" concept suggests future integrations like AI-driven commerce, payments, and real-time translations.

However, not everyone is optimistic. Experts warn that increased AI integration could lead to privacy concerns, with vast amounts of user data being analyzed to train AI models. Additionally, Musk did not seek investor approval before the merger, raising questions about corporate governance.

Despite the concerns, Musk remains confident that this transformation will push X to the next level. As CEO Linda Yaccarino put it, "The future could not be brighter." If executed well, this merger could redefine social media, making X the first truly AI-powered global platform.



# India Sends Urgent Aid to Quake-Hit Myanmar

- India sends 15-tonne aid
- IAF aircraft delivers supplies
- Quake kills 144 in Myanmar
- Relief includes food, medicine



India is sending approximately 15 tonnes of relief materials to Myanmar, which was severely affected by a devastating earthquake that struck on Friday. The powerful quake caused widespread destruction, toppling buildings, bridges, and even a monastery in Myanmar, while neighboring Thailand also reported significant damage. In response, India has swiftly organized humanitarian aid, which will be transported via a C-130J military aircraft of the Indian Air Force. The aircraft is scheduled to depart from the Hindon Air Force Station on Saturday, carrying essential supplies to assist those in distress. The relief package includes a range of

emergency provisions such as tents, sleeping bags, blankets, ready-to-eat meals, water purifiers, solar lamps, generator sets, and much-needed medicines. These supplies are expected to provide immediate support to survivors who have lost their homes and access to basic necessities due to the disaster. The earthquake has left at least 144 people dead in Myanmar, with countless others injured and displaced. In Thailand, the tremors led to the collapse of a high-rise under construction in Bangkok, resulting in at least 10 fatalities. Videos and images from Myanmar's hardest-hit regions depict widespread devastation, with rubble lining the streets and critical infrastruc-

ture reduced to ruins.

India's rapid response reflects its strong ties with Myanmar and its longstanding commitment to humanitarian aid in times of crisis. As a neighboring country, India has frequently extended support to Myanmar, particularly during natural disasters, reinforcing its role as a dependable ally in the region. Officials have indicated that if the situation demands, India is prepared to send additional assistance to help Myanmar in its recovery efforts.

Meanwhile, international organizations and neighboring countries have also begun mobilizing resources to aid Myanmar in coping with the aftermath of the earthquake. Rescue and relief operations are underway, with efforts focused on locating survivors, clearing debris, and restoring essential services. With thousands left without shelter, immediate assistance is crucial in preventing further casualties and alleviating suffering. India's timely intervention is expected to bring much-needed relief to those affected, ensuring that displaced families receive food, medical care, and temporary shelter. The Indian government has reaffirmed its commitment to standing by Myanmar during this challenging period, pledging to provide continued support as the country works to recover from the devastating impact of the disaster.

## ISRO Successfully Tests Semicryogenic Engine for LVM3

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has achieved a major milestone in its semicryogenic engine development program with the successful hot test of the Engine Power Head Test Article (PHTA) on March 28. The test was conducted at ISRO's Propulsion Complex in Mahendragiri, Tamil Nadu, marking a significant breakthrough in the design and development of the Liquid Oxygen/Kerosene engine with a high thrust of 2,000 kN (kilonewtons). This engine will power the semicryogenic booster stage of the Launch Vehicle Mark-3 (LVM3), enhancing its payload capacity and performance.

The test was crucial in validating the integrated performance of key subsystems, including the pre-burner, turbo pumps, start system, and control components, by carrying out a short-duration hot-firing of 2.5 seconds. ISRO confirmed that the ignition and boost strap mode operation proceeded as expected, with all engine parameters meeting predictions. This success paves the way for a series of further tests on the PHTA to fine-tune and optimize the engine's performance before fully integrating it. The Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC) is responsible for developing the semicryogenic propulsion engine and stage (SCI20), which will replace the existing L110 liquid core stage of LVM3. This transition will significantly enhance payload capacity, increasing it from 4 tonnes to 5 tonnes in Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

The semicryogenic propulsion system employs non-toxic and non-hazardous propellants—Liquid Oxygen and Kerosene—offering higher performance than the current L110 stage. The SE-2000 engine consists of critical subsystems, including the thrust chamber, pre-burner, turbo pump system, control components, and start-up system. These components, made of specialized materials to withstand high-temperature oxidizer-rich combustion, have been developed in collaboration with the Indian industry. Given the complexities involved, only a few nations possess this advanced technology.

To test and qualify the semicryogenic engine and stage, ISRO has developed the state-of-the-art Semicryogenic Integrated Engine Test facility (SIET) at its Propulsion Research Complex (IPRC) in Mahendragiri. This facility, dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in February 2024, plays a crucial role in ISRO's future launch vehicle development. Before conducting integrated engine-level hot tests, ISRO is evaluating intermediate configurations like the Power Head Test Article (PHTA), which includes all engine systems except the thrust chamber. The test on March 28 was the first in a planned series aimed at validating the propellant feed system, turbo pumps, pre-burner, start system, and control components. ISRO has meticulously tested all subsystems before integrating them into the PHTA. The ignition sequence for the PHTA was derived from multiple single-element hot tests. Additionally, a Pre-burner Ignition Test Article (PITA) was developed to ensure smooth ignition, consisting of a pre-burner, feed systems, start systems, and related control components. A series of successful tests with the PITA led to the derivation of an optimal start sequence for the power head test article. With this crucial milestone, ISRO is now preparing for further tests to refine the engine's design, bringing India one step closer to the operational deployment of this advanced technology.



## Vijay Slams DMK, BJP at TVK Meet

Actor and Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief Vijay held his party's first general council meeting on Friday, where he launched a sharp attack on both the DMK-led Tamil Nadu government and the BJP-led central government. Accusing them of having a secret understanding, Vijay called both parties fascists and alleged that while the DMK openly allies with the Congress for votes, it maintains a covert alliance with the BJP for financial benefits. He referred to the BJP as the "secret owner" of the DMK, criticizing their governance tactics. Addressing key national issues, Vijay opposed the delimitation exercise based on population, Hindi imposition, and the distribution of central funds, targeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies. He warned the central government, emphasizing Tamil Nadu's history of resistance and asserting that the state has demonstrated its power multiple times. Vijay also took a strong stance against the proposed Waqf Bill and urged the Union government to withdraw it, aligning with a resolution recently passed by the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly. During the meeting, TVK passed 17 resolutions outlining its official stance on various issues, setting the stage for its political journey.

## CBI Rules Out Gang Rape in R.G. Kar Case

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which has been investigating the rape and murder of an on-duty doctor at Kolkata's R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, informed the Calcutta High Court on March 28, 2025, that the incident was not a case of gang rape. The revelation came during a hearing before Justice Tirthankar Ghosh, where CBI Deputy Solicitor General Rajdeep Majumder stated that after thorough investigations and expert medical opinions, the agency has ruled out the possibility of gang rape in the August 9, 2024, incident. However, the CBI remains committed to probing other crucial aspects of the case, including potential conspiracy, cover-up efforts, and the destruction of evidence. The case, which has garnered wide-

spread attention, saw a major legal development earlier this year. On January 18, the Additional District and Sessions Court in Sealdah convicted Sanjay Roy, a former civic police volunteer, for the rape and murder of the doctor. Two days later, on January 20, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Despite this conviction, the victim's parents have continued to demand further investigation into the case, prompting the ongoing hearings. Meanwhile, the incident has sparked protests from the medical community, with doctors and nurses organizing marches demanding justice for the victim. On March 24, 2025, healthcare professionals took to the streets in Kolkata's Salt Lake area, demonstrating their outrage and calling for transparency



in the investigation. While the CBI's latest findings have ruled out gang rape, the agency's continued focus on conspiracy and evidence tampering

suggests that more revelations may emerge. The case remains a subject of intense public scrutiny, with calls for justice growing stronger.

## India Assists Myanmar with 'Operation Brahma'



India has launched 'Operation Brahma' to provide humanitarian aid to Myanmar following the devastating 7.7-magnitude earthquake that has claimed over 1,000 lives. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed that no casualties have been reported among the Indian community in Myanmar. Addressing a press conference on Saturday, MEA

Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had conveyed his condolences and assured Myanmar of India's full support in relief efforts. Modi spoke with Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the head of Myanmar's military-led government, reaffirming India's solidarity in this time of crisis. The Prime Minister also took to

social media to emphasize India's commitment to aiding Myanmar through relief and rescue operations. Highlighting India's immediate response, Jaiswal announced the launch of 'Operation Brahma', explaining that the name signifies creation and India's role in helping Myanmar rebuild after the devastation. The first relief aircraft, carry-

ing 15 tonnes of essential supplies, including tents, sleeping bags, blankets, ready-to-eat meals, water purifiers, solar lamps, generator sets, and medicines, took off from Hindon Air Force Base at 3 am and landed in Yangon by 8 am IST. India's Ambassador to Myanmar personally received the consignment before handing it over to the Chief Minister of Yangon. Following this, two more aircraft were dispatched, carrying search and rescue personnel, specialized equipment, and trained canines to assist in operations. Additionally, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar confirmed that a 118-member Indian Army Field Hospital unit is on its way from Agra to Mandalay. This team will provide first aid and emergency medical services to those affected by the disaster. India's swift response aligns with its 'First Responder' policy, reinforcing its commitment to assisting neighboring countries in times of crisis. The ongoing rescue efforts and relief supplies underscore India's dedication to regional cooperation and humanitarian assistance.





## "We Will Be Helping": Trump After Myanmar Hit By Huge Earthquake

TPN Correspondent | Washington

President Donald Trump expressed his support for Myanmar following a massive earthquake that struck the Southeast Asian nation on Friday, pledging U.S. assistance. The 7.7-magnitude earthquake, which also affected neighboring Thailand, resulted in over 150 fatalities and left hundreds more injured.

Speaking from the Oval Office, Trump called the earthquake “terrible,” emphasizing the severity of the disaster. He confirmed that the United States had already been in contact with Myanmar’s military rulers. “It’s a real bad one, and we will be helping,” Trump said in response to questions about the country’s appeal for international aid.

Myanmar’s ruling military junta, led by General Min Aung Hlaing, had earlier publicly invited “any country, any organization” to provide assistance for the disaster. The military regime has been grappling with the aftermath of a brutal civil conflict that began after their 2021 coup, which ousted the democratically elected government. The ongoing civil war has severely impacted Myanmar’s infrastructure, including healthcare services, leaving the nation ill-equipped to handle such a large-scale natural disaster.

The earthquake’s toll has placed further strain on the country, already facing dire humanitarian challenges. Myanmar’s rulers have sought aid from global powers and organizations to help with relief efforts.

Despite the U.S. government’s long-standing criticism of Myanmar’s military regime, particularly regarding its violent suppression of opposition and political prisoners, the U.S. has pledged to assist in the aftermath of the disaster. This aid commitment comes as Myanmar deepens its ties with Russia. General Min Aung Hlaing recently visited Moscow to meet President Vladimir Putin, discussing a potential deal for Russia to help construct a nuclear power plant in Myanmar. As Myanmar continues to face both internal conflict and natural disasters, the international community, including the U.S., is responding to the urgent need for humanitarian relief.



TPN Correspondent | Dhaka

Bangladesh police have filed a case against former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and 72 others, accusing them of conspiring to overthrow the interim government led by Muhammad

# Curfew Lifted in Kathmandu After Violent Protests, Two Dead and Over 100 Injured

- 14 buildings burned, vehicles destroyed; 105 arrested.
- Former King Gyanendra’s privileges revoked amid unrest.
- Government deploys Nepal Army, vows to restore stability.

TPN Correspondent | Kathmandu

Kathmandu, Nepal: Authorities in Nepal lifted a day-long curfew in the eastern part of Kathmandu on Saturday, following violent protests that resulted in two fatalities and left over 100 people injured. The curfew, which was imposed at 4:25 pm on Friday, was lifted at 7 am on Saturday after tensions in the area began to subside, according to a notice from the Kathmandu District Administration Office.

The violence erupted on Friday when pro-monarchy protesters clashed with security personnel in the Tinkune area of Kathmandu. The protesters pelted stones, set fire to vehicles, attacked political party offices, and looted shops. The clashes escalated into a deadly confrontation, with two people, including a TV cameraman, losing

their lives and at least 110 others suffering injuries, including 53 police officers, 22 Armed Police Force personnel, and 35 protesters.

To restore order, the Nepal Army was deployed, and police arrested 105 individuals involved in the unrest, including Dhawal Shumsher Rana, the general secretary of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party, and central party member Rabindra Mishra. Durga Prasai, the primary figure behind the violent demonstration, remains at large, according to Superintendent of Police Apil Bohara.

The protests led to widespread damage, with 14 buildings set on fire, nine damaged, and several vehicles destroyed. Among the property targets were government vehicles and media houses, including the Kantipur Television building and Annapurna Media House.



The unrest followed months of pro-monarchy activism. Protesters, led by monarchists, have been demanding the reinstatement of the monarchy and a return to a Hindu kingdom. This movement gained momentum after former King Gyanendra Shah appealed for support in a video message on Democracy Day in February 2025.

In response to the unrest, the gov-

ernment revoked King Gyanendra’s state privileges and canceled his passport, accusing him of inciting the violence. Nepal’s political landscape has shifted dramatically since 2008 when the country transitioned from a monarchy to a secular, democratic republic. The government’s quick response, including the lifting of the curfew, aims to stabilize the situation as further security discussions continue.

## Over 1,000 Dead, 2,376 Injured: Myanmar-Thailand Quakes Flatten Buildings

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A powerful 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck Myanmar and parts of neighboring Thailand on Friday, leaving a trail of destruction and causing a rising death toll. As of Saturday, the combined death toll in both countries has exceeded 1,000.

The earthquake, with a magnitude of 7.7, hit northwest of Sagaing, Myanmar, at 12:50 pm (0650 GMT) on Friday. It struck at a shallow depth of just 10 km. This was followed by a 6.7-magnitude aftershock and several smaller tremors.

The quake’s effects were felt across the region, with buildings shaking from India in the west to China in the east, as well as in Cambodia and Laos.

Myanmar’s military junta reported that the death toll in the country has surpassed 1,000. The ongoing civil conflict, following the military’s seizure of power, has severely hampered emergency response efforts.

In Thailand, the earthquake led to at least 10 deaths, primarily due to the collapse of a high-rise building under construction near Bangkok’s Chatuchak market. As many as 100 workers are



feared to be trapped in the rubble.

In Myanmar’s Mandalay, entire buildings collapsed into rubble, with emergency workers and locals rushing to rescue those trapped beneath the debris. The historic Ava Bridge also collapsed

into the Irrawaddy River.

In an unprecedented move, Myanmar’s military regime appealed for international aid. Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing urged assistance from any country or organization.

## Plot to oust Yunus govt? Case filed against Hasina in Bangladesh

Yunus. The case, led by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), alleges that Hasina and the others planned to bring her back to power through a civil war, according to media reports.

The Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate’s Court took cognizance of the case on Thursday, instructing the CID to launch an investigation into the matter. The allegations stem from an online meeting held on December 19, 2024, where participants reportedly formed a platform called the “Joy Bangla Brigade.” During the meeting, the attendees discussed plans to reinstate Hasina through violent means, including waging

civil war. Police say that voice recordings from the meeting revealed conversations between Hasina and several key figures, including Dr. Rabbi Alam, who hosted the meeting. The participants allegedly expressed a determination to prevent the legitimate government from governing peacefully. A total of 577 individuals, both from Bangladesh and abroad, are said to have attended the meeting, showing support for Hasina’s actions. Alam, the vice president of the Awami League’s US chapter, is named as the second accused in the case. Hasina’s government was ousted in August 2024 following a violent student-led uprising, and since then, she has

been living in India, secretly fleeing Bangladesh.

Since her removal, Hasina has faced over 100 charges, including accusations of mass murder and corruption. Many leaders and ministers from her government have been arrested or fled abroad to avoid trial. Yunus, who took over as Chief Adviser of the interim government, has been accused by Hasina’s supporters and political analysts of orchestrating her ouster with the support of a Western government. Hasina and several of her party leaders are also facing charges at Bangladesh’s International Crimes Tribunal for alleged crimes against humanity

## Violence Erupts in Nepal as Pro-Monarchy Protesters Clash with Authorities

TPN Correspondent ,Kathmandu

Tensions flared in Kathmandu, Nepal, as a protest march organized by supporters of former King Gyanendra Shah turned violent on Friday, leading to the deaths of two people and injuries to at least 112 others. The march, demanding the restoration of the monarchy and a Hindu kingdom, escalated when protesters clashed with police after attempting to march toward the parliament building.

Pro-monarchy demonstrators threw stones, attacked political party offices, looted shops, and set vehicles on fire. The violence led to the death of a television cameraman and a protester, and police were forced to use rub-

ber bullets, tear gas, and live rounds to disperse the crowd. The army was later called in to restore order.

The authorities imposed a curfew in parts of Kathmandu starting at 4:25 pm on Friday, which was lifted on Saturday morning. As of Saturday, 105 individuals had been arrested, including prominent members of the pro-monarchy Rastriya Prajatantra Party. Among those arrested were the party’s general secretary, Dhawal Shumsher Rana, and central member Rabindra Mishra. The key figure behind the protest, Durga Prasai, remains at large. The violence marked a significant escalation in the ongoing debate about Nepal’s political future. While the

monarchy was abolished in 2008, some citizens, including the protesters, seek its reinstatement. Gyanendra Shah, the last king of Nepal, has kept a low profile since his abdication, though recent public appearances and a video message in February reignited the pro-monarchy movement.

The unrest prompted strong condemnation from opposition parties, with former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’ calling for accountability, accusing Gyanendra Shah of being behind the violence. The protests highlight deep frustrations over Nepal’s political instability, which has hindered economic growth and failed to meet the public’s expectations for jobs, security, and good governance.





# India's Current Account Deficit Widens to \$11.5 Billion in Q3 Due to Higher Trade Deficit

India's current account deficit (CAD) expanded to USD 11.5 billion, or 1.1% of GDP, during the December quarter of the fiscal year 2024-25, compared to USD 10.4 billion (1.1% of GDP) in the same period last year, according to data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday. This increase was primarily driven by a higher merchandise trade deficit.

However, despite the widening deficit, the CAD showed improvement when compared to the previous quarter (Q2 2024-25), which had seen a much larger deficit of USD 16.7 billion, or 1.8% of GDP. This decline in CAD from Q2 to Q3 reflects some stabilization in the trade imbalance.

In the third quarter, India's merchandise trade deficit increased to USD 79.2 billion from USD 71.6 billion in the same period of the previous year. Despite this, India saw growth in net services receipts, which rose to USD 51.2 billion in Q3 2024-25, up from USD 45 billion in Q3 2023-24. This increase was attributed to higher services exports across all major categories, providing a partial offset to the widening trade deficit.

The current account deficit for the April-December 2024 period also widened to USD 37 billion, or 1.3% of GDP, compared to USD 30.6 billion (1.1% of GDP) in the same period last year. This continued de-

terioration in the CAD was largely driven by the elevated merchandise trade deficit.

The RBI's data also highlighted that India's services sector continues to perform robustly, supporting the country's external position despite the challenges posed by the trade deficit.

In related fiscal developments, the Centre's fiscal deficit stood at 85.8% of the annual target by the end of February 2025. The fiscal deficit during the April-February 2024-25 period amounted to Rs 13.46 lakh crore, with an estimated total deficit of Rs 15.69 lakh crore for the financial year.



## Centre's Fiscal Deficit Reaches 85.8% of Annual Target by February

The Centre's fiscal deficit for the current financial year reached 85.8% of the revised annual target by February, according to official data released on Friday. This is slightly better than the 86.5% deficit recorded in the same period last year, driven by tight expenditure control, particularly in capital expenditure.

The data suggests that the government is on track to meet its fiscal deficit target of 4.8% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the 2024-25 fiscal year, despite challenges such as lower-than-expected disinvestment proceeds and the recently approved supplementary demands for grants. Analysts have pointed out that the disciplined approach to spending, especially in terms of curbing capital expenditure, has played a crucial role in managing the fiscal deficit.

Capital expenditure has been a focal point for the government this year, with efforts to limit spending in this area to ensure that the fiscal deficit remains within the target. At the same time, the government has faced challenges with disinvestment receipts, which have been lower than anticipated, impacting overall revenue generation. However, the government's prudent fiscal management and focus on essential expenditure appear to be mitigating these challenges.

Despite these hurdles, experts believe that the government will be able to achieve its fiscal deficit goal, provided there are no major revenue shortfalls in the final quarter of the financial year. The fiscal deficit target of 4.8% is seen as crucial for maintaining macroeconomic stability and for sustaining the confidence of both investors and credit rating agencies in the Indian economy.

As the end of the financial year approaches, the government will continue to monitor spending and revenue inflows to ensure that the fiscal deficit remains within the targeted limits, and fiscal consolidation remains a priority in the coming months.

## BSE Shares Surge Following Sebi's Proposal on Uniform Expiry for Equity Derivatives

Shares of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) surged nearly 18% on Friday after the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) proposed a uniform expiry date for all equity derivatives contracts across exchanges. The BSE stock jumped by 17.81%, reaching Rs 5,519 on the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

The proposal, outlined in a Sebi consultation paper released Thursday, suggests that expiry dates for equity derivatives be standardized across exchanges, limiting them to either Tuesdays or Thursdays. This proposal is intended to optimize the spacing between expiries and avoid the complications of having either the first or last day of the week designated as an expiry day. Sebi further recommended that exchanges must seek Sebi's approval before launching or modifying any contract expiry or settlement day.

Meanwhile, the NSE, which had initially planned to shift the expiry date of all index and stock derivatives from Thursday to Monday starting April 4, 2025, has decided to defer the change for now. The exchange had previously announced that Nifty weekly contracts, which currently expire on Thursdays, would be moved to Mondays. Additionally, the expiry date for Nifty's monthly, quarterly, and half-yearly contracts was set to change from the last Thursday of the month to the last Monday.

However, following Sebi's consultation paper, the NSE decided to delay the implementation of these changes until further notice. In a circular issued late Thursday, the NSE confirmed the deferral, citing Sebi's ongoing consultation on final settlement days (expiry days) for equity derivatives.

Sebi's proposal aims to create a more consistent and streamlined system for derivatives contracts, benefiting both market participants and exchanges. Under the new framework, exchanges will still have the flexibility to choose one weekly benchmark index options contract for expiry on either Tuesday or Thursday. This move seeks to bring uniformity to the expiry process while enhancing market efficiency.



## German firm from chemical sector to invest USD 1.5 bn in India: Goyal

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal announced on Saturday that a German chemical company has decided to invest USD 1.5 billion in India. While he did not disclose the name of the company or the state involved, Goyal revealed that the company's head is scheduled to meet the state's chief minister on Sunday. The company has already been allocated land for the project, and the foreign direct investment (FDI) is expected to flow into the country over the next 12 months.

The company is seeking a 250-acre parcel of land near a port, and Goyal emphasized that the land allotment would be finalized soon. Germany is currently India's ninth-largest investor, having contributed approximately USD 15 billion in FDI between April 2000 and December 2024. Goyal highlighted that more international companies are looking to India for business opportunities, citing improvements in the country's business environment.

The government, according to Goyal, has undertaken significant measures to reduce the compliance burden and decriminalize minor offences, which have bolstered investor confidence. He assured potential investors that the government is ready to assist them in overcoming any legal obstacles or unfair competition, particularly related to predatory pricing practices.



Addressing the topic of arbitration, Goyal discussed its potential to reduce judicial delays, provided both parties involved are sincere in accepting arbitration results. He acknowledged concerns about the quality of arbitration and emphasized the need for more robust arbitration processes. Goyal expressed concerns about whether the government presents its case effectively and whether arbitration decisions are influenced by larger corporate interests or international pressures.

He stressed the importance of strengthening arbitration and mediation mechanisms to ensure fairness and foster confidence among all stakeholders. Goyal also noted that as India's manufacturing sector grows, disputes will inevitably arise, and a more efficient dispute resolution system would help maintain an unclogged court system, thus supporting India's aspirations of becoming a global manufacturing hub.

## India's Solar Manufacturing Capacity to Reach 125 GW by 2030: Pralhad Joshi

Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi, announced on Saturday that India's solar photovoltaic (PV) module manufacturing capacity will increase to 125 gigawatts (GW) by 2030, up from the current 80 GW. In addition, the country's installed solar cell manufacturing capacity will soon reach 40 GW, up from 25 GW. Joshi made these remarks during the inauguration of a state-of-the-art 5.4 GW solar cell manufacturing facility by Waaree Energies Limited in Gujarat's Navsari district.

Joshi highlighted India's impressive growth in the solar manufacturing sector, stating that in 2014, the country had no solar PV module manufacturing industry. Today, companies like Waaree are producing 80 GW of solar PV modules. By 2030, India aims to achieve a total solar PV manufacturing capacity of 125 GW. Similarly, solar cell manufacturing, which was non-existent in 2014, is now at 25 GW and is expected to soon reach 40 GW. The government's vision includes integrated solar manufacturing in India, spanning everything from polysilicon to modules.

India has become the third-largest producer of renewable energy globally, and the minister ex-



pressed confidence that the country would reach its renewable energy target of 500 GW by 2030, up from the current 220 GW. Joshi attributed this progress to the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that under his leadership, India has emerged as a global leader in renewable energy.

The minister also emphasized India's commitment to reducing its carbon footprint. Despite having 17% of the world's population, India contributes less than 4% to global greenhouse gas emissions. Nevertheless, India is taking significant steps to harness solar and wind energy to ensure a sustainable future for the next generation. Solar PV modules, which were once imported

from countries like China, are now being locally manufactured due to initiatives like the Approved List of Models and Manufacturers (ALMM) and the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. Joshi affirmed that the government's goal is for India to become a global leader in manufacturing everything from polysilicon and solar modules to green ammonia and methanol.

The growing demand for energy in India is expected to double by 2032. As part of this, the government aims to provide electric connectivity to 18,100 villages and transform India into a global manufacturing hub, leveraging its credibility and human resources. Over the past 60 years, India's electricity generation capacity has risen from 269 GW to 459 GW in just the last decade.

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, who was present at the event, praised PM Modi for transforming Gujarat into a "development role model." He highlighted the state's pro-business policies and infrastructure, which have made Gujarat an attractive destination for industrialists and innovators. Under the state's Atmanirbhar Gujarat policy, 183 units have been established with an investment of ₹43,000 crore.





## Woman’s Rs 1,000 Purchase Could Be Rs 8.5 Crore Renoir Drawing

A Pennsylvania woman, Heidi Markow, may have made an extraordinary discovery after purchasing a drawing for just \$12 (Rs 1,026) from an antique store. Experts now believe the artwork could be an authentic piece by the renowned French artist Pierre-Auguste Renoir, potentially worth over \$1 million (Rs 8.5 crore). According to a report by ABC News, the drawing is thought to be a rare Renoir charcoal sketch from the 1800s. Markow, who runs an antiques business, came across the 17.5-inch by 16.5-inch artwork at a collector’s auction in Montgomery County in January. Something about the piece caught her attention, and she was determined to buy it. “There were paintings selling for \$1,000, \$2,000, or even \$3,000. I didn’t know what this was, but I just had a feeling that it was special,” she recalled. Encouraged by her instincts, she urged her husband to place a bid on the drawing. To her surprise, he managed to purchase it for only \$12. Now, Markow is working with experts to authenticate the artwork. If proven to be an original Renoir, she hopes to sell it for a significant amount, ideally in the six or seven-figure range. However, she emphasizes that she wants the piece to go to someone who truly appreciates its value and historical significance. For now, the art world eagerly awaits the final verdict on whether this extraordinary find is indeed a lost masterpiece by Renoir.



## Tourist Assaulted in Goa, Vows Never to Return

A tourist’s harrowing experience in Goa has gone viral after he detailed being physically assaulted and verbally abused by two locals near Madgaon railway station. In a social media post titled “Got physically abused in Goa, will probably never come back,” the man recounted the shocking incident that has left him shaken. According to his post, he had rented a car for his trip to avoid the scorching heat and was on his way to catch a train from Madgaon station after dropping his girlfriend at the airport.

While driving, he allegedly “cut” two men on a scooter, though he insists there was no contact between their vehicles. The two men allegedly followed him to the station, blocked his car, and threatened to break his windshield. “One guy got off, picked up a stone, and threatened to break the windshield if I didn’t open the window,” he wrote. When he complied, he claimed he was punched multiple times and verbally abused. The attackers allegedly taunted him for being an outsider, further adding to his distress. “I barely

managed to return the car and catch my train, thanks to some locals who helped me escape,” he wrote. The incident has left him deeply disturbed. “This has scarred all the good times I had in Goa. I hate Goa now because of this,” he expressed in his post. Though he plans to file a police complaint, he admitted he was unable to capture any footage of the attackers or their vehicle. The viral post has sparked outrage online, with many calling for stronger safety measures for tourists visiting the popular destination.



## New Plastic Dissolves in Saltwater

A team of Japanese scientists at the RIKEN Center for Emergent Matter Science (CEMS) has developed a new type of plastic that remains strong during use but dissolves in saltwater, offering a potential solution to ocean pollution caused by microplastics. Traditional plastics are highly durable due to their strong covalent bonds, which prevent them from breaking down naturally. As a result, plastic waste accumulates in the environment, posing a major threat to marine life and human health. The newly developed plastic, however, is designed to maintain its strength while in use but break down harmlessly when exposed to seawater. The research, led by Takuzo Aida, focuses on supramolecular plastics—polymers held together by reversible interactions. The team used a combination of two ionic monomers that form cross-linked salt bridges, which provide both durability and flexibility. One of the monomers is sodium hexametaphosphate, a common food additive, while

the other is a guanidinium ion-based monomer. These materials are biodegradable, as they can be metabolized by bacteria after dissolving. “While supramolecular plastics have been considered weak due to their reversible bonds, our new material proves otherwise,” said Aida. The key breakthrough was discovering how to create selectively irreversible cross-links that only break down when exposed to seawater electrolytes. During the manufacturing process, the researchers observed that when the monomers were mixed with water, two distinct liquid layers formed—one thick and viscous, containing essential salt bridges, and the other watery, containing expelled salt ions. The final plastic, named alkyl SP2, was created by drying the thick liquid layer. This innovative material could significantly reduce plastic waste in the ocean, paving the way for more sustainable alternatives to conventional plastics.

## iPhone Users Can Set WhatsApp Default



WhatsApp has rolled out a new update for iPhone users, enabling them to set it as their default calling and messaging app. This feature was initially announced by Apple for users in the European Union but has now been made available to all iPhone users with iOS 18.2. According to WaBetaInfo, to access this feature, users must update WhatsApp for iOS to version 25.8.74. This update allows users to bypass Apple’s default Phone and Messages apps, integrating WhatsApp as their primary communication tool. This update marks a significant shift in iOS functionality, giving users more control over their preferred communication platforms. Apple had initially restricted third-party apps from

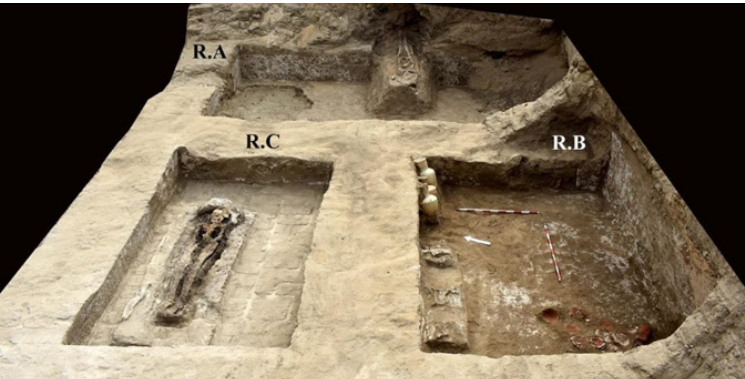
taking over core functions like calling and messaging, but regulatory pressure has led to increased flexibility. By setting WhatsApp as the default app, users can seamlessly make calls and send messages through the platform, which has over 2 billion users worldwide. This move is particularly useful for those who rely heavily on WhatsApp for communication, as it eliminates the need to switch between multiple apps. Apple’s decision to allow third-party apps as defaults aligns with global efforts to enhance user choice and promote competition in the tech industry. As iOS continues to evolve, more such updates are expected to improve customization options for users.

## 3,200-Year-Old Tomb Linked to Ramesses III

Archaeologists in Egypt have uncovered a 3,200-year-old tomb that may have belonged to a military commander who served during the reign of Pharaoh Ramesses III. The discovery was made at Tell el-Maschuta, a site in northeastern Egypt, and was confirmed by the country’s Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The tomb is made of mud bricks and features a burial chamber along with three adjoining rooms. Inside, researchers found several artifacts, including a gold ring bearing the name of Ramesses III and a collection of bronze arrowheads. Other notable items recovered include an intricately carved ivory box and pottery vessels with inscriptions. One of the most intriguing aspects of the discovery is the presence of inscriptions referencing Horemheb, a

pharaoh who ruled between 1323 and 1295 B.C. Horemheb was known for his military career before ascending the throne, leading experts to question why his name appears on objects within the tomb. One theory suggests that some of the burial items were reused from an earlier period. However, the presence of artifacts linked to Ramesses III indicates that the tomb was likely in use during his reign, which lasted from around 1184 to 1153 B.C. While the tomb’s artifacts suggest a possi-

ble connection to both Ramesses III and Horemheb, more research is needed to determine its true origins and purpose. Archaeologists plan to conduct further excavations and analysis to uncover more details about the individual buried there and the historical significance of the tomb. This discovery adds to the growing body of evidence about Egypt’s rich and complex past, offering new insights into burial practices and political dynamics during the New Kingdom period.







## MI's Start Goes From Bad To Worse, GT Claim First Win

In a thrilling encounter at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on March 29, 2025, Gujarat Titans (GT) secured their first victory of the season by defeating Mumbai Indians (MI) by 36 runs. Both teams entered the match seeking their inaugural win, having lost their opening fixtures. BIZNEWS INDIA GT's Dominant Batting Performance GT set a formidable target, posting a total of 196/8 in their 20 overs. Opener B Sai Sudharsan led the charge with a

stellar half-century, contributing 63 runs off 41 balls. Captain Shubman Gill added 38 runs from 27 balls, while Jos Buttler scored 39 off 24 balls, laying a strong foundation for the innings. Despite a late surge from MI's bowlers, including Hardik Pandya's two-wicket haul, GT managed to reach a competitive total. THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS MI's Chase Falters Under Pressure MI's chase got off to a challenging start, with Mohammed Siraj striking early by dis-

missing captain Rohit Sharma for just 8 runs in the first over. He followed up by removing Ryan Rickelton, leaving MI at a precarious 48/2 within the power-play. Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma attempted to rebuild, adding 62 runs for the third wicket. However, the introduction of Prasidh Krishna shifted the momentum in GT's favor, as he dismissed both Yadav and Varma, reducing MI to 97/4. BUSINESS NEWS TODAY Despite efforts from Hardik Pandya, who

contributed 11 runs off 17 balls before falling to Kagiso Rabada, MI's batting order crumbled under pressure. The required run rate escalated, and wickets continued to fall at regular intervals. MI's chase concluded at 160/9, handing GT a well-deserved victory. BUSINESS NEWS TODAY **Key Performance Gujarat Titans:** B Sai Sudharsan: 63 runs off 41 balls Shubman Gill: 38 runs off 27 balls Jos Buttler: 39

runs off 24 balls Hardik Pandya (MI): 2 wickets for 29 runs Mumbai Indians: Suryakumar Yadav: 48 runs off 28 balls Tilak Varma: 39 runs off 36 balls Hardik Pandya: 11 runs off 17 balls; 2 wickets for 29 runs This victory propels Gujarat Titans to a favorable position in the league standings, while Mumbai Indians will need to regroup and strategize for their upcoming matches to turn their season around.

## Delhi Capitals Eye Second Win as KL Rahul Returns to Face Wounded Sunrisers

Delhi Capitals are aiming to build on their morale-boosting win over Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) as they prepare to face Sunrisers Hyderabad in their next IPL 2025 clash on Sunday. The Capitals, fresh off a thrilling victory, are further strengthened by the return of India wicketkeeper-batter KL Rahul, who missed the season opener due to the birth of his first child. Rahul's return is expected to provide much-needed stability to Delhi's top order, which struggled in the previous match. Despite being absent in the first game, Rahul's presence will be crucial in the middle order, bolstering the batting lineup. His experience in big tournaments, including his contribution to India's Champions Trophy win in Dubai earlier this year, will be valuable for the squad. Rahul, who was picked by Delhi Capitals for ₹14 crore, will be keen to prove his worth after

a challenging stint with Lucknow Super Giants, where he was not retained. Now, he is looking to rediscover his form and push for a spot in India's T20 squad. Delhi's previous match saw them overcome a tough situation. Chasing a target of 211, they were reeling at 65/5 before Ashutosh Sharma (66\*) and Viraj Nigam (39) engineered a thrilling one-wicket win. Rahul's return should provide the team with the much-needed stability, with his leadership also serving as a vital support for Axar Patel, who is captaining the team for the first time. Meanwhile, Sunrisers Hyderabad have had a mixed start to their campaign. After an explosive opening game where they posted 286/6, they faltered in their second match, posting just 190/9. Despite their strong batting line-up, SRH's lack of substantial totals in their recent loss highlights the need to convert starts into big scores.



## Manisha Bhanwala Wins Gold, Antim Panghal Bags Bronze at Asian Wrestling Championships

Indian wrestlers Manisha Bhanwala and Antim Panghal delivered stellar performances at the Asian Wrestling Championships 2025 in Amman, Jordan, on Friday, clinching gold and bronze medals in their respective categories. Manisha Bhanwala created history by securing India's first women's freestyle wrestling gold at the continental meet since 2021. She defeated Ok J Kim from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) 8-7 in a thrilling final. Manisha had a remarkable journey to the final, with wins over Kazakhstan's Tynys Dubek and Republic of Korea's Hanbit Lee. She also outperformed defending champion Kalmira Bilimbek Kyzy of Kyrgyzstan with a 5-1 victory. Despite trailing 2-7 in the final, Manisha showed incredible determination to turn the match around and clinch



the gold.

Meanwhile, Antim Panghal, making her return to international wrestling after the Paris 2024 Olympics, earned a bronze medal in the 53kg division. Panghal began her campaign with a strong 10-6 win over China's Jin Zhang, a World Championships silver medallist. However, she was defeated by Japan's 55kg world champion Moe Kiyooka in the semi-finals via technical superiority.

Panghal bounced back to defeat Chinese Taipei's Meng Hsuan Hsieh, securing a bronze medal with a dominant performance. These two medals pushed India's tally at the championships to seven—one gold, one silver, and five bronze. On Thursday, Reetika Hooda won silver in the 76kg women's freestyle category. Other bronze medalists include Muskan (59kg), Mansi Lather (68kg), and Greco-Roman wrestlers Nitesh (97kg) and Sunil Kumar (87kg). Unfortunately, wrestlers Neha Sharma, Monika, and Jyoti Berwal did not secure medals on the day. The Indian men's freestyle wrestlers, including Tokyo 2020 Olympian Deepak Punia, will be in action over the next two days, adding to India's medal hopes at the ongoing event.

## Chapman, Nathan Smith powers New Zealand to victory over Pakistan by 73 runs in first ODI

Mark Chapman's brilliant 132 and Nathan Smith's impressive four-wicket haul led New Zealand to a dominant victory over Pakistan in the first ODI of their three-match series at McLean Park, Napier, on Saturday. Chapman was awarded the Player of the Match for his outstanding performance, which guided the Kiwis to a comfortable win. With this victory, New Zealand takes a 1-0 lead in the series, with the second match scheduled for Wednesday in Hamilton. New Zealand, batting first, set a challenging target of 345



runs, finishing with 344/9 in their 50 overs. Apart from Chapman's brilliant knock, Daryl Mitchell contributed 76 runs off 84 balls, and Muhammad Abbas played a quick-fire innings of 52 runs from 26 balls. Pakistan's bowlers tried to keep the total in check, with Irfan Khan claiming 3 wickets for 51 runs in

5 overs, and Haris Rauf and Akif Javed both picking up 2 wickets each. In reply, Pakistan began their chase with a solid start from openers Abdullah Shafique and Usman Khan, who put on a partnership of 83 runs. Shafique scored 36 runs off 49 balls, and Khan added 39 runs off 33 balls be-

fore being dismissed in the 13th over. Pakistan's middle order, led by Babar Azam (78 runs off 83 balls) and Salman Agha (58 runs from 48 balls), kept the chase alive, but it wasn't enough as the visitors were bowled out for 244 runs in the 45th over. Nathan Smith was the standout bowler for New Zealand, taking 4 wickets for 60 runs in 8.1 overs, while Jacob Duffy supported well with 2 wickets for 57 runs in 9 overs. William O'Rourke, Michael Bracewell, and Muhammad Abbas each took one wicket in their respective spells.



To become highest run-getter for in history of Indian Premier League

## MS Dhoni surpasses Suresh Raina

Former Chennai Super Kings (CSK) captain MS Dhoni achieved a remarkable milestone on Friday, surpassing Suresh Raina to become the highest run-scorer in the history of the five-time Indian Premier League (IPL) champions. Dhoni reached this landmark during the eighth match of IPL 2025, held at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai, where he played an explosive knock of 30 not out off 16 balls, at a staggering strike rate of 187.5, which included three boundaries and two sixes. With this performance, the 43-year-old wicketkeeper-batter now holds the record for most runs for CSK, amassing a total of 4,699

runs in 204 innings, at an average of 40.50 and a strike rate of 139.43. This surpassed Raina's previous record of 4,687 runs, which he scored in 171 innings for the franchise before retiring from the sport. Other players on the list of top run-scorers for CSK include Faf du Plessis, who scored 2,721 runs in 86 innings, current captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, with 2,433\* runs from 67 innings, and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who has accumulated 1,939 runs in 127 innings. While Gaikwad and Jadeja continue to play for CSK, du Plessis has moved on to join Delhi Capitals as their vice-captain for the ongoing IPL season.







# Krithi Shetty's Glam Magic Lights Up Kollywood!

Krithi Shetty is making waves in Kollywood with her stunning presence! The actress recently turned heads at the JFW Movie Awards 2025, where she dazzled in a golden bralette, matching jacket, and a black thigh-slit skirt, paired with silver heels. Her sleek high bun and effortless confidence made her a true red-carpet sensation. As she accepted her award, Krithi exuded glamour and poise, cementing her place as a rising star in the Tamil film industry. Fans are eagerly awaiting her upcoming Kollywood film LIK, where she will be seen alongside Pradeep Ranganathan. With her undeniable charm and talent, Krithi is all set to make a lasting mark in the industry.

## Ustaad Bhagat Singh Faces Major Delay



Pawan Kalyan's highly anticipated film Ustaad Bhagat Singh, directed by Harish Shankar, has hit a major roadblock. After completing a few schedules, the shoot was put on hold due to Pawan Kalyan's political commitments. As per sources,

the film is unlikely to resume production this year. The actor must first wrap up Hari Hara Veera Mallu and OG before returning to this project. Additionally, Pawan Kalyan is reportedly facing health issues and requires time to recover,

further delaying the shoot. Despite the setback, Ustaad Bhagat Singh, produced by Mythri Movie Makers, remains one of the most awaited films. Fans will have to wait longer for an official update on its progress.

## Akshay Kumar's Film on Jallianwala Bagh Massacre



The Jallianwala Bagh massacre remains one of the darkest and most tragic events in India's fight for independence, where hundreds of innocent people lost their lives due to British brutality. Now, a film exploring the aftermath of this historical tragedy is set to release. Bollywood star Akshay Kumar takes the lead role in Kesari Chapter 2, alongside Madhavan, Regina Cassandra, and Ananya Panday in pivotal roles. Directed by Karan Singh Tyagi, the film is produced by Karan Johar under the Dharma Productions banner. As a summer treat, Kesari Chapter 2 is slated for release on April 18. To build anticipation, the makers have unveiled the film's first look, generating excitement among audiences.

## Kalyan Ram's Naayaldhi Set to Drop Soon!



Nandamuri Kalyan Ram's much-awaited film Arjun S/O Vyjayanthi is all set to elevate the excitement with its first single, Naayaldhi, releasing on March 31st. Composed by B Ajaneesh Lokanath, the song is expected to be a high-energy dance number. A newly revealed poster showcases Kalyan

an Ram striking a stylish pose with his signature charm, hinting at a grand celebration. The film has already made waves in the industry, setting a new record in pre-release business with theatrical and non-theatrical rights selling at record-breaking prices. Directed by Pradeep Chilukuri, the film stars Vijayashanthi

as Kalyan Ram's mother, with Saiee Manjrekar as the female lead. The emotional mother-son bond is expected to be a major highlight. Produced by Ashok Vardhan Muppa and Sunil Balusu under Ashoka Creations and NTR Arts, Arjun S/O Vyjayanthi is shaping up to be a massive entertainer.

## Kajal Aggarwal's Strong Comeback in Sikandar



Salman Khan's much-awaited film Sikandar is set for a grand release tomorrow, marking his return to Eid releases. While the buzz around the film is steadily growing, reports confirm that Kajal Aggarwal, the female lead, has

a substantial role rather than a mere cameo. Once a leading actress, Kajal took a break after becoming a mother but is now making a strong comeback with major projects, including Sikandar. Directed by A.R. Murugadoss, the film

also features Sathyaraj as the main antagonist, while Rashmika Mandanna plays another key female role. With an exciting cast and high expectations, Sikandar is poised to make a big impact at the box office.