



Atishi Criticizes Delhi’s ₹1 Lakh Crore Budget, Calls It ‘Jumla’

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader and Leader of the Opposition, Atishi, strongly criticized the newly unveiled ₹1-lakh-crore Delhi budget on Friday, March 28, 2025, calling it a case of “jumla” (empty rhetoric). Atishi claimed that the budget lacked clarity on where the funds would come from, dismissing the large figure presented by the newly formed Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government as misleading.

Atishi argued that the actual revenue for Delhi would only be around ₹78,000 crore, not the ₹1 lakh crore as claimed by the Delhi government. She accused Chief Minister Rekha Gupta of misleading the people of Delhi with an inflated budget figure that did not align with the city’s actual revenue streams.

Addressing the media during a press conference, Atishi pointed out that the BJP government had not provided any concrete details regarding the sources of the additional ₹22,000 crore they planned to allocate. “The numbers presented in the budget are purely speculative, with no real backing or transparency about where the money will come from,” Atishi said. She further criticized the government for failing to provide a clear roadmap for the budget’s execution, adding that such tactics were a form of political gimmickry aimed at misleading voters. Atishi’s comments come as the BJP government has faced increasing scrutiny over its financial planning and budgetary allocations. While the government’s budget was touted as ambitious and comprehensive, the lack of detailed information about funding sources has raised questions among political analysts and citizens alike.

India Launches ‘Operation Brahma’ to Assist Quake-Hit Myanmar

- India delivers 15 tonnes of relief material to Myanmar
- NDRF deploys 80-member rescue team to assist operations
- Indian naval ships carrying 40 tonnes of humanitarian aid
- PM Modi assures Myanmar of India’s full support



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

As Myanmar grapples with widespread devastation caused by a massive 7.7 magnitude earthquake, India has swiftly responded with humanitarian aid and rescue efforts under ‘Operation Brahma’. On Saturday, India delivered 15 tonnes of relief material to Myanmar and announced further aid through air and sea routes. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a conversation with Myanmar’s Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, conveyed India’s deep condolences and reaffirmed support for the quake-hit nation. “As a close friend and neighbor, India stands

in solidarity with the people of Myanmar in this difficult hour,” PM Modi said in a statement on ‘X’. He also confirmed that disaster relief materials, humanitarian assistance, and search and rescue teams were being expedited as part of Operation Brahma.

Massive Relief Operations Underway

India has deployed an 80-member strong National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team to Myanmar’s capital, Nay Pyi Taw, to aid search and rescue operations. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar confirmed the dispatch, stating that two Indian naval ships, INS

Satpura and INS Savitri, carrying 40 tonnes of humanitarian aid, are en route to Yangon Port. The Indian Air Force’s C130J aircraft transported the first batch of relief supplies to Yangon, comprising tents, sleeping bags, blankets, ready-to-eat meals, water purifiers, solar lamps, generators, and essential medicines. Officials confirmed that two additional IAF aircraft carrying further relief material would depart from Air Force Station Hindon soon. Furthermore, 60 para-field ambulances are also being sent as part of India’s emergency aid to Myanmar. Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the External Affairs Minis-

try, described India’s response as that of a “First Responder”, ensuring immediate assistance to the affected region.

High-Level Coordination and Ongoing Efforts

The relief materials at Yangon Airport were formally handed over to Chief Minister of Yangon U Soe Thein by India’s Ambassador to Myanmar, Abhay Thakur. The Indian embassy in Myanmar has been actively coordinating the speedy delivery of relief supplies while also remaining in contact with the Indian community in Myanmar. The NDRF team, led by Commandant P.K. Tiwary of the 8th NDRF battalion, will conduct search and rescue operations in accordance with International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) norms. The team is also equipped with trained rescue dogs to assist in locating survivors trapped under collapsed structures.

Rising Casualties and Indian Support

According to Myanmar’s military-led government, the death toll has risen to 1,002, with 2,376 people injured. Authorities caution that these numbers may increase as rescue operations continue. Prime Minister Modi, while extending support to Myanmar, also expressed concern for neighboring Thailand, which was impacted by the quake. “India stands ready to offer all possible assistance,” he stated, adding that authorities have been directed to remain on standby for further relief efforts. India’s swift response through Operation Brahma highlights its commitment to humanitarian aid and regional cooperation, reaffirming its role as a trusted neighbor and first responder in times of crisis.

Won’t let anyone diminish Bengal’s feats: Mamata Banerjee

Stands Firm Amid Controversy, Expresses Pride in Oxford Visit



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Before departing London, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee took to social media to express her pride in her experience at Oxford University, while also standing firm in the face of protests and criticism following her speech. In a post on her official “X” handle, she emphasized that despite facing backlash, she would not back-track on her views.

Reflecting on her life journey, Mamata Banerjee shared a personal message, writing, “From the day I lost my father as a child, life has been a battle, one that I have fought as a student leader, as the voice of the opposition, and now as the head of a people’s government.” She added that her resolve to fight and stand firm had never wavered

throughout her political career. “I have never shied away from struggle, and I never will,” she asserted.

Mamata also used the post to highlight her commitment to her state’s achievements, stating that she would not allow anyone to undermine Bengal’s progress or question the sacrifices that had shaped her leadership and her government. The remarks came in response to the protests she had faced on Thursday during her address at Kellogg College, Oxford University, where her comments about India’s economic future sparked controversy.

The chief minister’s defiant stance has drawn mixed reactions, with critics accusing her of damaging India’s global reputation, particularly her disagreement with the prediction that India could become the world’s largest economy by 2060. Despite the backlash, Banerjee remained steadfast in defending her position, focusing on the importance of Bengal’s accomplishments and her unwavering dedication to her state’s development. Mamata’s post underscored her resilience and determination to stand by her beliefs, even when facing opposition, and reaffirmed her commitment to working for the betterment of Bengal and its people.

'Sabotaging' democracy: Priyanka Gandhi alleges Modi govt is blocking discussions in Parliament

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday accused the Union government of undermining the democratic process in Parliament by preventing proper discussions. Addressing reporters in Wayanad, she alleged that the government has adopted a strategy to avoid discussions at all costs, using various tactics to block dialogue.

Vadra highlighted that the government frequently disrupted parliamentary proceedings, responding to questions about the alleged suppression of opposition voices. “The government’s approach over the past few sessions has been to avoid discussions by any means necessary—whether it is by raising issues they believe will provoke protests from the opposition or by denying the Leader of Opposition the opportunity to speak,” she said. The Congress leader expressed concern that the government was hindering the smooth functioning of democracy in Parliament, calling it a “sad” situation for the Members of Parliament (MPs) to witness. “The opposition is often blamed for sabotaging Parliament, but it is actually the government itself that is undermining the process, which is something new for everyone to see,” Vadra asserted.



Vadra’s remarks were made in the context of ongoing frustrations within the opposition, who have been accusing the Centre of curbing their ability to hold the government accountable through meaningful discussions in Parliament. The Congress leader further emphasized the importance of upholding the sanctity of parliamentary proceedings and allowing for constructive debates and discourse.

Earlier in the day, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra attended the District-Level Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DISHA) meeting at the Collectorate in Kalpetta, where local issues and development projects were discussed. Vadra’s criticism of the Centre’s handling of parliamentary affairs comes amid rising concerns over the government’s approach to opposition voices and democratic processes in the country’s legislature.

- Incident highlights growing parliamentary discord.
- Opposition demands discussion on fair elections under Rule 176.
- Government resists, leading to increased tensions.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A meeting of the Rajya Sabha's Business Advisory Committee (BAC), which was convened to allocate time for the discussion of government legislative and other business next week, was disrupted by unusual scenes

Citing 'lack of decorum: Dhankhar walks out of BAC meet after standoff

on Friday. Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar walked out of the meeting, citing a "lack of decorum." The incident occurred following sharp differences between the government's floor managers and Opposition members regarding which issues should be prioritized for discussion.

Sources within the Opposition claimed they had been demanding a short-duration discussion under Rule 176 concerning the need for free, fair, and clean elections. While the Congress had previously raised concerns about irregularities in the electoral rolls in Maharashtra, the Trinamool Congress had pointed out issues



related to duplicate Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers. Opposition leaders argued that despite the gov-

ernment's repeated assurances to discuss all matters, it had shown reluctance to engage in a conversation about ensuring clean elections.

The Opposition's push for a discussion on the integrity of the electoral process created tension within the meeting, with government representatives reportedly resisting the suggestion.

The standoff led to a heated exchange, with Chairman Dhankhar ultimately walking out, expressing frustration over the lack of decorum in the proceedings.

This incident underscores the growing tension between the government and the Oppo-

sition in the Rajya Sabha, especially on issues of electoral reforms.

While the government has emphasized its readiness to engage in discussions, the Opposition remains firm in its demand for transparent elections, raising concerns over the credibility of the electoral process.

The disruption in the BAC meeting raises questions about the functioning of parliamentary committees and the ability to conduct smooth discussions amid heightened political tensions. It also reflects the broader challenges in achieving consensus on key issues in the current political climate.

1st Page Cont..

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"Adopt A Conscious, Sensitive Lifestyle Towards Environment": President Murmu

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

President Droupadi Murmu called on citizens to adopt a lifestyle that is not only environmentally conscious but also sensitive, ensuring that the environment is not only protected but also enhanced for future generations. Speaking at the National Conference on Environment-2025 held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, she emphasized that it is the moral responsibility of every individual to leave behind a legacy of a clean and vibrant environment for future generations.

President Murmu highlighted the importance of conservation, stressing that the foundation of India's development heritage lies in "nurture, not exploitation; protection, not elimination." She pointed out that this mindset is deeply rooted in Indian culture, which emphasizes living in harmony with nature. "In keeping with this heritage, we want to move forward towards a developed

India," she said, urging the nation to integrate environmental sustainability into the path of progress.

The president specifically commended the tribal communities of India, noting how they have lived in harmony with nature for centuries, taking care of the environment, plants, and animals. She called their lifestyle exemplary, especially as the world grapples with global warming and climate change. "We should take inspiration from their way of life," she added, underscoring that their practices offer valuable lessons for sustainable living. President Murmu also encouraged people to make conscious and sensitive decisions that contribute not only to protecting the environment but also to making it more vibrant. She stressed that the future of humanity depends on adopting environmentally friendly practices and that the entire world must follow a green path to ensure real progress.

Govt aims to keep internet free of unlawful content

Ashwini Vaishnaw on notice to X over Delhi stampede videos

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha regarding the notice issued to social media platform X for the removal of videos related to the stampede at New Delhi Railway Station, Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw clarified that the government's policies are designed to ensure that the internet remains free from unlawful content and misinformation.

In his written reply on Friday, Vaishnaw explained that the government's actions align with the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which were notified under the Information Technology Act, 2000. These rules impose specific obligations on

intermediaries, including social media platforms, to exercise due diligence when managing and moderating content.

The Minister emphasized that the government's priority is to maintain the integrity of online platforms, ensuring that they do not become vehicles for spreading harmful or misleading information. Vaishnaw stated that social media intermediaries are required to adhere to these guidelines, which include the removal of content that could be deemed unlawful or harmful to public order.

The issue at hand arose after certain videos related to the recent stampede at New Delhi Railway Station circulated on X, sparking concern over the accuracy and appropriateness of the content being shared.



The government intervened by issuing a notice to ensure that such content was removed in accordance with the regulations. This response by the Minister highlights the increasing scrutiny and regulatory measures being applied to social media platforms, particularly

concerning the spread of sensitive information. Vaishnaw's remarks reinforce the government's stance on ensuring that digital platforms operate within the legal framework while balancing the need for free expression with the responsibility of preventing harm.

Delhi HC asks jailed Rashid to deposit ₹4 lakh for going to Parliament in custody

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi High Court directed Jammu and Kashmir Member of Parliament (MP) Abdul Rashid Sheikh, commonly known as Engineer Rashid, to deposit ₹4 lakh with prison authorities as travel expenses for attending the ongoing Budget Session of Parliament.

The court's decision comes after it granted Rashid's request to attend the second part of the Budget Session, scheduled from March 26 to April 4, 2025, while still in custody. The court had accepted his plea on March 25, allowing him to attend the session "in-custody" under stringent conditions.

Engineer Rashid, a prom-



inent political figure and the leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Awami Ittehad Party (AIP),

had been seeking permission to attend the Parliament session to fulfill his legislative duties despite being in custody. The court allowed this, acknowledging the importance of his role as a sitting MP but ensuring that the conditions were met to maintain security and other logistical considerations.

The ₹4 lakh deposit will cover Rashid's travel expenses to and from the Parliament and other associated costs. This decision ensures that the necessary arrangements are made while keeping the legal protocols in place. The court made it clear that Rashid would be under tight supervision and subject to all security measures

while attending the Parliament sessions.

The order highlights the balance between an individual's rights as a representative of the people and the conditions of their custody. Rashid's legal team had argued that his absence from Parliament would hinder his ability to perform his duties as a lawmaker, and the court ultimately agreed to his request under these exceptional circumstances. The case is a significant moment in the ongoing intersection of legal processes and political responsibilities, underscoring the delicate nature of ensuring both justice and the functioning of democratic institutions.

Kunal Kamra Faces More Legal Trouble as Mumbai Police Registers Additional Cases

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra is facing mounting legal issues with three more cases being filed against him at Khar police station in Mumbai. The new cases stem from his alleged controversial remarks about Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Complaints were lodged by a range of individuals, including the Mayor of Jalgaon, a busi-

nessman, and a hotelier from Nashik. Despite being summoned twice by the police for questioning, Kamra has failed to appear.

Amidst these escalating troubles, the Madras High Court granted Kamra interim anticipatory bail until April 7, 2025. The comedian approached the court citing security threats and concerns for his safety following his satirical remarks.

Kamra had been facing multiple FIRs in connection with his comments, and this interim relief allows him some respite as he navigates these legal challenges.

On March 27, the Mumbai police issued a third summons, asking Kamra to appear for questioning at Khar police station on March 31. This is the third such summons, with Kamra having skipped the

previous two. The complaints leading to these cases have been filed by various individuals, including Shiv Sena MLA Murji Patel.

The controversy surrounding Kamra began with his "gaddar" (traitor) remark, which was allegedly directed at Eknath Shinde. The remark sparked political outrage, with several leaders demanding action against Kamra. In re-

sponse, members of the Yuva Sena, the youth wing of Shinde's Shiv Sena, vandalized the venue where Kamra's performance was recorded.

Throughout the controversy, Kamra has criticized the mainstream media for its perceived bias, accusing it of acting as a propaganda arm for the ruling party. He even suggested that the media shutting down would be a favor to



the country and its citizens. Kamra's remarks have sparked widespread political backlash, fueling the ongoing legal and public disputes.

Will discontinue all of AAP’s education schemes, will bring new programmes: CM Rekha



“The AAP government’s education programs were more about advertisements and political gain, rather than helping students become self-reliant and prepared for the future,” he said. The new initiatives set to replace these programs include Rashtraneeti, New Era of Entrepreneur Ecosystem and Vision (NEEEV), and Science of Living.

Sood emphasized that the new programs would focus on providing hands-on, practical knowledge to students, which he believes is more important than theoretical learning. Under the NEEEV program, students from Class 8 onwards will work directly with startups and industries to gain practical experience.

As part of the new initiatives, student groups will receive seed funding of ₹20,000, significantly higher than the ₹2,000 given to individual students under Business Blasters. According to a senior official from the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), these programs are designed to offer practical training and connect students with real-world opportunities in the startup ecosystem.

“The students have the potential; they just need the opportunities to learn,” Sood added. The new budget includes funds for these programs, and once administrative formalities are completed, they will be launched. The BJP government aims to prioritize practical, skill-based education to ensure students are better equipped to face future challenges.

- New initiatives include Rashtraneeti, NEEEV, and Science of Living.
- Focus shifts to hands-on learning, industry collaboration.
- Students to receive ₹20,000 seed funding under new programs.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

more practical benefits to students.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Delhi government has decided to discontinue the flagship education schemes introduced by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), including the Happiness Curriculum, Business Blasters, and Mission Buniyaad. Education Minister Ashish Sood announced the move on Friday, stating that these programs would be replaced by new initiatives aimed at providing

Sood criticized the AAP’s education schemes, alleging that they were designed for political mileage and advertising rather than truly benefiting students. According to Sood, the previous government focused more on publicity than ensuring students were equipped with the skills necessary to succeed in the real world.

Statehood in Jammu and Kashmir to be restored as promised: Amit Shah



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah reiterated the central government’s commitment to restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, as promised earlier. However, Shah did not specify a timeline for when this would happen.

Speaking at a summit in New Delhi on the night of March 28, 2025, Shah addressed the ongoing discussions about Jammu and Kashmir’s political status post-abrogation of Article 370. He assured that the promise to reinstate statehood would be honored, but emphasized that a precise date would not be provided at this stage.

Shah also pointed to the successful Assembly elections held in Jammu and Kashmir in the previous year as a sign of progress. He described the elections as peaceful and democratic,

highlighting the government’s efforts to ensure the smooth conduct of the electoral process in the region.

The statement by Shah comes amid continued political discussions surrounding the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, which was revoked by the central government in 2019. The region’s statehood was stripped at the time, leading to widespread debate about the future of Jammu and Kashmir’s governance and its integration into the national framework.

Although Shah’s remarks were intended to reassure the public of the government’s intentions, they did little to clarify when the restoration of statehood would actually take place. His comments are likely to fuel further conversations in political and public circles about the timing and conditions for such a move.

Extra tankers, pumps to meet peak water demand in Capital: Parvesh

Delhi Government Prepares for Summer Water Crisis with New Measures

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a meeting with officials from the Delhi Jal Board, Water Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh announced that the government will appoint nodal officers in four divisions across the city to address water shortage issues during the upcoming summer months. These officers will be responsible for promptly resolving complaints from both residents and Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), ensuring a more efficient response to water-related concerns.

Minister Singh emphasized that the Summer Action Plan is fully prepared and is under constant review to ensure that the government is well-prepared for the season. “We are monitoring the situation closely, making sure that all measures are in place to prevent a water crisis,” Singh said during the meeting.

To tackle potential water shortages, the government plans to install additional water pumps in areas where freshwater availability is still sufficient.

For areas requiring tankers, the number of water tankers will be increased to meet the demand. Singh also highlighted ongoing efforts to address water leakage issues, which contribute to the overall water crisis in the city.

These proactive steps aim to ensure that the residents of Delhi do not face severe water scarcity during the hot summer months. The government has been under increasing pressure to manage the city’s water resources more effectively, particularly as water levels in reservoirs continue to fluctuate, and population growth places additional strain on existing infrastructure.

By appointing dedicated officers and expanding water delivery services, the Delhi government hopes to minimize disruptions and provide better access to water for its residents. The Summer Action Plan, along with measures to reduce water wastage and leakage, reflects the government’s commitment to managing the city’s water resources more efficiently this summer.



Rahul Gandhi Blames BJP's "Cronyism" and "Regulatory Mismanagement" for Banking Sector Crisis



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Rahul Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, on Saturday accused the BJP-led government of causing a crisis in India’s banking sector due to “cronyism” and “regulatory mismanagement.” Gandhi stated that this situation has had severe repercussions, particularly for junior employees who are forced to endure high levels of stress and toxic work environments.

In his post on X, Gandhi criticized the BJP government for writing off a staggering Rs 16 lakh crore in loans for their “billionaire friends,” highlighting what he termed as “economic mismanagement” that ultimately harms thousands of honest professionals working in the sector. He claimed that these missteps result in a broader crisis, with the brunt of the impact felt by employees.

Gandhi shared a video from a recent meeting with a delegation of ex-ICICI Bank employees who claimed to have suffered due to the “mismanagement” in the banking sec-

tor. The employees alleged that they were subjected to workplace harassment, forced transfers, retaliation for exposing unethical practices, and unfair dismissals. Some members of the delegation also cited instances where these injustices led to tragic outcomes, including suicides.

The Congress leader further emphasized that the banking crisis, triggered by the government’s mismanagement, places a disproportionate burden on junior employees, who are often left to deal with stress and unhealthy working conditions. He urged those who have faced similar injustices to share their stories with him via his website.

The delegation of ex-ICICI Bank employees had previously met Gandhi at Parliament, claiming that their dismissals were often abrupt and occurred during medical leave or while raising concerns about unethical practices within the bank. Gandhi pointed out that such practices were not isolated to ICICI Bank but were prevalent across many private sector banks, driven by immense pressure to maximize profits.

No immediate response was received from ICICI Bank regarding the allegations.

‘Treasonous, Embarrassment For All Indians

Suvendu Urges Jaishankar To Ban Mamata Banerjee’s Foreign Visits

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

West Bengal’s Leader of Opposition, Suvendu Adhikari, on Friday appealed to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to prevent Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee from undertaking any future foreign visits in her official capacity. In a letter to Jaishankar, Adhikari accused Banerjee of tarnishing India’s reputation during her recent visit to the United Kingdom.

Adhikari highlighted controversial remarks Banerjee made in London, where she expressed admiration for the UK’s colonial past, stating, “I love the UK because we have an emotional relation, historical relation... From the heritage point of view, ours and from yours also. 190 years, you ruled in India. You ruled Bengal... So we forget that? Always India remembers you, and Bengal also remembers you.”

Adhikari criticized the Chief Minister for glorifying the colonial era, arguing that such statements were “unthinkable” for a Bengali, especially considering Bengal’s pivotal role in the fight against British rule. He accused Banerjee of undermining the sacrifices of freedom fighters by revering the colonial past.

In addition to her remarks about the UK, Banerjee



faced backlash for her comments at Oxford University’s Kellogg College, where she downplayed India’s economic growth. When a speaker highlighted India surpassing the UK as the world’s fifth-largest economy, Banerjee disagreed, stating, “I will differ that.” Adhikari labeled her remarks as “treasonous” and claimed they were an embarrassment to both Bengal and India. He further alleged that Banerjee was intentionally tarnishing India’s image abroad by opposing its economic progress.

Adhikari called on the Ministry of External Affairs to launch an investigation into Banerjee’s statements and to bar her from future official foreign visits. He cited regulations that require approval from the Ministry for such trips and argued that her controversial remarks should be grounds for disqualification from official foreign engagements.

Banerjee’s UK visit had already been marred by protests at Kellogg College, where demonstrators raised concerns about her stance on election-related violence in West Bengal.

Delhi Power Minister Ashish Sood Refutes Kejriwal's Allegations on Power Cuts



TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

Delhi Power Minister Ashish Sood strongly dismissed allegations made by Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor Arvind Kejriwal regarding power cuts

in the Jagatpur Extension area, calling them exaggerated and politically motivated. Sood assured the public that power supply in the area had significantly improved, describing the reported outages as isolated incidents rather than prolonged interruptions.

- Cites data showing 21,597 outages in a year, averaging 59 per day.
- Claims significant improvements under BJP leadership.
- BJP and Congress promise to continue AAP's free electricity scheme.

Sood challenged Kejriwal's statements on social media, providing data from the past year to counter the claims. He pointed out that there had been 21,597 power cuts lasting an hour or more, averaging 59 outages per day. Sood also refuted Kejriwal's assertion of no power cuts in the past decade, accusing him of spreading false information.

To substantiate his argument, Sood cited data from planned outages for maintenance and shared figures from January 2025, showing 3,278

power cuts. He emphasized that under his leadership, significant improvements had been made, compared to the previous administration. These improvements included the establishment of a 24x7 control room, joint monitoring with DISCOMs and DTL, and the readiness to procure additional power when required.

Sood also criticized Kejriwal for lacking administrative experience and claimed that his team had withheld crucial information. He relied on data from the State Load Dispatch Centre

to refute the AAP leader's claims, reiterating that efforts to stabilize the power supply in Delhi were ongoing.

Ahead of the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress promised to continue the free electricity scheme introduced by AAP. The free electricity policy was among several popular initiatives that boosted AAP's credibility. However, the party's image was tarnished by graft allegations and the imprisonment of key leaders, including Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Satyendar Jain, and Sanjay Singh.

Despite a change in leadership within AAP, with Atishi taking charge, the party's chances in the upcoming elections seem uncertain. After dominating the 2015 and 2020 elections with a massive majority, AAP won only 22 seats in the last election, as the BJP, with 48 seats, formed the government under Rekha Gupta's leadership.

Service charges in restaurants cannot be mandatory : Delhi HC

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court ruled on Friday that the service charge in restaurants is a voluntary payment by the customer and cannot be made mandatory. The court stressed that collecting service charges in a coercive manner is "contrary to consumer interest" and "violative of consumer rights."

Justice Prathiba Singh dismissed two petitions filed by restaurant bodies, which challenged the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) guidelines prohibiting hotels and restaurants from mandatorily adding service charges to food bills. The court found the practice of enforcing service charges in a mandatory fashion to be harmful to consumer rights, reinforcing



ing the principle that customers should have the freedom to decide whether or not to leave a service charge.

The court also imposed a cost of Rs 1 lakh on each of the petitioning restaurant bodies. The amount, as per the court's directive, is to be deposited with the CCPA and used for consumer welfare initiatives.

This decision reinforces the CCPA's stance on service charges, which came into effect to protect consumers from being unfairly charged for services they may not have opted for. The guidelines are part of the broader effort to ensure fairness and transparency in the hospitality industry, empowering customers to make informed choices when dining out.

The ruling is seen as a significant victory for consumer rights, as it puts a stop to the forced collection of service charges in restaurants, giving customers the autonomy to decide whether or not to pay the additional charge based on their experience. It also highlights the importance of protecting consumer interests and ensuring that businesses operate in a transparent and ethical manner.

Delhi Sees Drop in Minimum Temperature, Settling at 15°C After Hottest Day of the Season



TPN Correspondent
| New Delhi

Just days after experiencing its hottest day of the season, Delhi recorded a notable drop in the minimum temperature, which settled at 15 degrees Celsius on Saturday. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the temperature was 2.6 degrees below the seasonal average.

At 8:30 am, the minimum temperature at Palam was 13 degrees Celsius, marking a difference of 4.7 degrees below the usual seasonal norm. The relative humidity recorded at 8:30 am was 32 percent, indicating relatively dry conditions in the morning hours.

This sudden temperature fluctuation comes after Delhi recently experienced an extreme

rise in temperatures, making it one of the hottest days of the season. The sharp contrast in weather has caught many residents off guard, as the city transitions between weather extremes.

The IMD's forecast also noted that the city's overall air quality remained a concern, with air pollution levels fluctuating in the moderate range. Authorities continue to monitor air quality, and residents are advised to stay updated on weather and pollution advisories.

As the capital braces for more shifts in weather patterns, experts recommend staying hydrated and avoiding prolonged exposure to the sun, especially during the hotter parts of the day, given the unpredictable temperature swings.

Delhi airport to hike charges for international business-class passengers from April 16

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a significant move, the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) has approved Delhi airport's request to levy differential user charges, with business class passengers on international flights now facing higher fees than their economy class counterparts. The new fee structure, which will be applicable from April 16, 2025, to March 31, 2029, marks a first in the country's aviation sector.

Under the new guidelines, international embarking passengers in economy class will pay ₹650, while those traveling business class will be charged ₹810 for embarking from Delhi airport. Similarly, disembarking passengers on international flights will pay ₹275 if traveling economy class, and ₹345 if traveling business class.

For domestic travelers, the user development fee remains unchanged at ₹129. Additionally, a new disembarking passenger fee of ₹56 will be introduced at Delhi airport. However, AERA

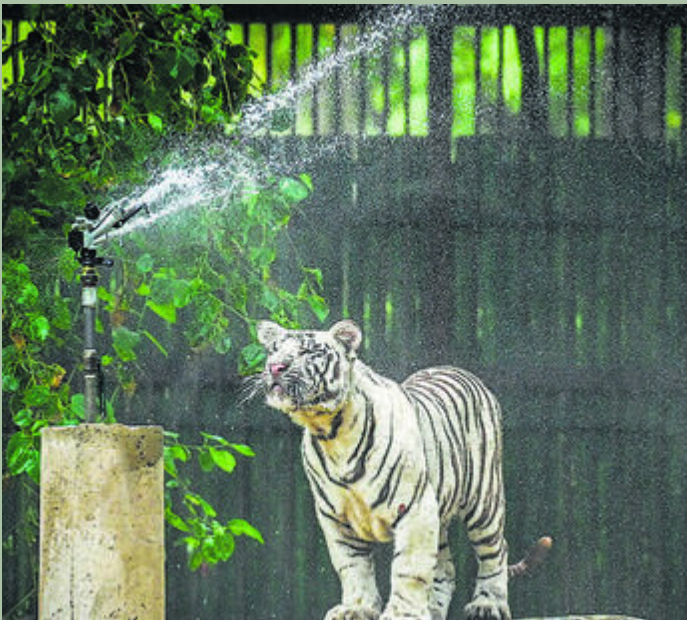
rejected the airport's proposal for differential tariffs based on peak and non-peak hours for domestic flights. The proposal suggested a fee of ₹405 for off-peak domestic hours and ₹610 for peak hours, with even higher charges for international economy class passengers during peak times.

The airport had proposed these changes to address the financial pressures it faces due to losses and an outstanding debt of over ₹15,000 crore. The expansion project, which has incurred capital expenditures in excess of ₹12,500 crore, has contributed to these financial challenges. Delhi airport claimed that the existing tariff rates were insufficient to meet its financial obligations, projecting a loss of over ₹1,500 crore for FY2025.

AERA's approval of the differential user charges represents a response to these financial difficulties, with the aim to improve revenue generation while balancing fairness for passengers.



Delhi Zoo rolls out summer action plan to protect animals from rising heat



TPN Correspondent
| Delhi

As temperatures in Delhi soar, reaching a three-year high of 38.9°C in March, the Delhi Zoo has rolled out a comprehensive summer action plan to ensure the comfort and well-being of its animals during the scorching heat.

Starting April 1, the zoo will implement a range of measures to help its residents beat the heat. Enclosures will be equipped with water sprinklers, cooling pools, shaded shelters, and fruit ice cubes. Special seasonal diets, including watermelon and cucumbers, will also be introduced to keep animals hydrated and cool. Zoo staff have been instructed to monitor animals closely for any signs of heat stress.

Zoo Director Sanjeet Kumar emphasized that the plan aims to prevent heat-related distress, particularly for carnivores such as tigers, lions, leopards, and wolves. These animals will benefit from both water sprinklers and cooling pools, which will regulate their body temperature. Additionally, moats surrounding their enclosures will be regularly drained and refilled

to keep the water fresh and cool.

For herbivores like deer, rhinoceroses, and elephants, water sprinklers will run continuously throughout the day. Bamboo and straw sheds will be placed in their enclosures to offer them shade and relief from the sun's intensity.

Primates will be provided with air coolers in their enclosures, while special fruit ice balls and coconut water will keep them hydrated. Bird enclosures will have sidewall curtains to block direct sunlight, and snake enclosures will be equipped with wet gunny bags to maintain humidity and a cooling effect.

Bears, who are especially sensitive to heat, will be kept in shaded feeding cells during the hottest hours of the day, and like other animals, will receive ice balls to stay cool.

This action plan reflects the zoo's commitment to safeguarding the welfare of its animals during extreme weather conditions, ensuring they remain comfortable and healthy throughout the summer months.

'Will end naxalism in given time': Chhattisgarh dy CM after Sukma encounter

TPN Correspondent | Chhattisgarh

In a significant operation, security forces in Chhattisgarh neutralized 16 Naxalites and recovered a large cache of arms and ammunition following a fierce encounter in the Kerlapal area of Sukma district on Saturday.

Chhattisgarh Deputy Chief Minister Arun Sao expressed the government's unwavering commitment to eradicating armed Naxalism in the region. He reiterated the resolve of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to eliminate Naxalism from the country by March 2026, with the support of dedicated security forces. "The bravery and courage shown by our security forces will help us achieve this goal within the given timeframe," he said.

Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran Chavan confirmed the neutralization of 16 Naxalites and revealed that two jawans had sustained injuries during the operation. They are currently being evacuated for medical treatment. The security forces also recovered a substantial cache of advanced weaponry, including AK-47 rifles, Self-Loading Rifles (SLRs), and INSAS rifles from the site.

"This can be called one of the



- Two jawans injured; evacuation for treatment underway.
- Operation part of India's goal to eliminate Naxalism by 2026.
- Security forces continue search operations in Kerlapal area.

biggest encounters Sukma has witnessed," said SP Chavan. He further added that the identities of the slain Naxals are yet to be confirmed. The exchange of fire began as part of a joint anti-Naxal operation launched by the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on Friday, based on specific intelligence about Naxal presence in the Kerlapal area.

The operation, which commenced on March 28, saw intermittent firefights through-

out the day on March 29. Security forces are currently combing the encounter site and the surrounding forest area, continuing their search for any remaining Naxals. Sukma, a part of Chhattisgarh's troubled Bastar region, has long been a hotspot for Naxal violence and attacks.

This successful operation is considered a major blow to the Naxal insurgency in the region and strengthens the resolve of the security forces to eliminate the Naxal threat.

‘Religious capital’: Varanasi to witness first-time closure of meat shops during Navratri

TPN Correspondent | Varanasi

In a historic move, Varanasi has decided to close all meat, fish, and poultry shops within the city's municipal limits throughout the Chaitra Navratri festival, beginning Sunday. This decision, marking a first for the city, was made during a meeting of the Varanasi Municipal Corporation's executive committee, which was chaired by Mayor Ashok Kumar Tiwari on Thursday.

The closure of these shops coincides with the Chaitra Navratri festival, a sacred period for Hindus, and Eid, which is expected to be celebrated on Monday, subject to the moon

sighting. The mayor emphasized the importance of strict compliance with this decision, noting that the closure is intended to respect the religious sentiments of the Hindu community during this auspicious time.

Tiwari stated, "The executive-approved proposal to close meat shops during Navratri will be enforced rigorously. Muslims should consider that their Hindu brothers find Navratri the most sacred. So, at least for nine days, let it be. Is anyone stopping them for 360 days?" He further explained that Varanasi, being a significant religious and cultural capital, attracts nearly 2 lakh pilgrims daily, under-

scoring the city's commitment to maintaining traditions that respect religious practices.

During the meeting, executive committee member Madan Mohan Dubey proposed the closure of meat, fish, and poultry shops for the entire duration of Navratri, which was accepted. Additionally, the committee imposed a ban on cigarette sales near religious sites and schools and approved a license fee for cigarette vendors.

This move is part of the city's broader efforts to align its policies with the cultural and religious values of its residents while promoting harmony between diverse communities.



J&K: Organisers of pro-Palestine rally in Budgam booked for ‘creating law-and-order situation’



TPN Correspondent | J&K

A case was filed on Friday against the organisers and participants of a procession in Jammu and Kashmir's Budgam district, following allegations that they created a law-and-order issue by raising objectionable slogans. The procession, held to mark Youm-e-Quds, took place in Sonpah village in Beerwah, located in central Kashmir.

According to a police spokesperson, the case was registered in response to the actions of the procession's organisers and participants, who reportedly disrupted public order. The police did not elaborate on the specific slogans raised, but they described them as inappropriate and capable of inciting unrest in the region.

The Youm-e-Quds procession is typically organized by individuals observing the day in solidarity with the Palestinian cause. While such events are usually peaceful, the incident in Sonpah village has raised concerns over the potential for communal tensions and the security situation in the area. Local authorities have urged all participants to adhere to the law and refrain from activities that might disturb public order.

Authorities are investigating the matter further and have assured that appropriate legal action will be taken against those found responsible for instigating or participating in unlawful activities. As of now, the police have not made any arrests, but they have warned against any future attempts to disrupt peace during such events.

The incident highlights the ongoing challenges of maintaining public order in Jammu and Kashmir, where political and religious sensitivities often intersect. The state has experienced periods of unrest in the past, and authorities are particularly vigilant when it comes to any potential triggers that could lead to violence or clashes between different groups. The case serves as a reminder of the delicate balance authorities must strike between allowing peaceful demonstrations and preventing actions that could escalate tensions.

Despite the crackdown, the farmer leaders, still determined, have vowed to continue their struggle for the MSP guarantee and other demands. The situation remains tense, with protests likely to persist across the region as farmers refuse to back down.

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

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

A powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 7.7 struck Myanmar and parts of neighboring Thailand on Friday, leaving a devastating trail of destruction and a rapidly rising death toll. As of Saturday, more than 1,000 people have lost their lives in both countries, with the toll continuing to climb.

The earthquake struck at 12:50 pm local time (0650 GMT), northwest of Sagaing, Myanmar, at a shallow depth of 10 kilometers. It was followed minutes later by a 6.7-magnitude aftershock, and several smaller tremors. The quake was felt across the region, shaking buildings from India to China, and including Cambodia and Laos. Myanmar's military junta confirmed that the death toll in the country had surpassed 1,000 by Saturday morning.

The ongoing civil war in Myanmar, sparked by the military's 2021 coup, has severely hampered the country's emergency services, which are struggling to respond to the scale of the disaster. In Thailand, at least 10 people were killed when a high-rise under construction near Bangkok's Chatuchak market collapsed, trapping up to 100 workers inside the rubble.

In Myanmar's Mandalay region, entire



buildings collapsed into twisted metal and rubble, and rescue workers scrambled to save survivors. The Ava Bridge, a nearly 100-year-old structure spanning the Irrawaddy River, also collapsed. In the wake of the devastation, Myanmar's isolated military regime made a rare public request for international aid, with Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing appealing to "any country, any organization" for help.

India was quick to respond, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressing concern and offering assistance. The Indian Air Force sent 15 tonnes of relief supplies, including tents, blankets, and medicines, to Myanmar. Thailand's government also held an emergency meeting to assess the damage. Both the European Union and the United States pledged their support, with US President Donald Trump confirming that Washington was in contact with Myanmar authorities, offering help in the wake of the tragedy.

“Resolved To Eradicate Naxalism”: 16 Maoists Killed In Chhattisgarh Encounter



TPN Correspondent | Chhattisgarh

At least 16 Naxalites were killed and two security personnel injured during a significant anti-Maoist operation in Sukma district, Chhattisgarh, on Saturday, according to officials. The injured personnel were members of the District Reserve

Guard (DRG), a special unit of the state police.

The encounter occurred early in the morning, around 8 am, in the forested area under the Kerlapal police station. A joint team of security forces, including the DRG and the Central Reserve Police

Force (CRPF), had launched the operation the previous night, following intelligence reports about Maoist activity in the region.

Inspector General of Police for Bastar Range, Sundarraaj P, confirmed that 16 Naxalites were killed in the gunfight, with their bodies recovered from the site. The operation is still ongoing as of the latest reports.

According to Sundarraaj, the operation targeted the presence of Maoist insurgents in Kerlapal, a known stronghold of the Naxals. The two DRG personnel who were injured during the confrontation sustained minor injuries, but their condition is stable.

The authorities also seized a significant haul of weapons and explosives from the site. Among the recovered items were an AK-47 rifle, self-loading rifles (SLR), an INSAS rifle, a .303 rifle, a rocket launcher, a barrel grenade launcher (BGL), and various explosive materials.

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

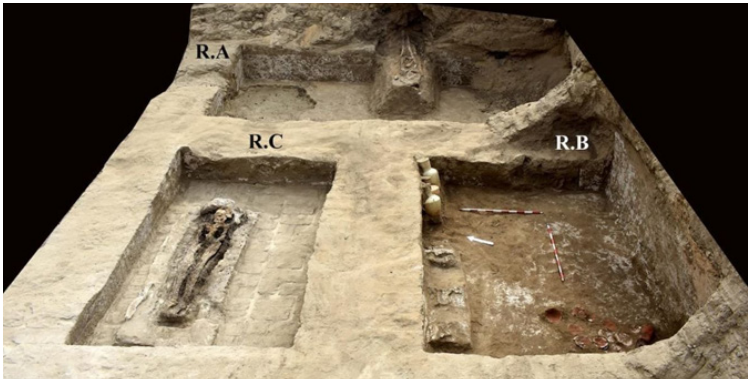
taking over core functions like calling and messaging, but regulatory pressure has led to increased flexibility. By setting WhatsApp as the default app, users can seamlessly make calls and send messages through the platform, which has over 2 billion users worldwide. This move is particularly useful for 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 dismissing 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 Performances	Statistics
Gujarat Titans: B Sai Sudharsan: 63 runs off 41 balls	Mumbai Indians: 160 runs off 20 balls
Shubman Gill: 38 runs off 27 balls	Jos Buttler: 39 runs off 24 balls
Hardik Pandya: 11 runs off 17 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 before 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

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.

MS Dhoni surpasses Suresh Raina





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.