



Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
H 33° C L 25° C	H 35° C L 26° C	H 36° C L 26° C



Delhi Government to present 2025-26 budget between March 24-26: Rekha Gupta

CM invites public suggestions for budget

Focus on women's aid, pollution, and Yamuna cleanup

Stakeholder meetings scheduled for March 5-6

Govt prioritizing public input over media events

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta announced on Monday that the budget session for the national capital will take place from March 24 to March 26. During a press conference, Gupta invited suggestions from the public, emphasizing that the government would attempt to incorporate these inputs into the upcoming budget. She assured the citizens that the budget would focus on creating a 'Viksit Dilli' (Developed Delhi) and stressed that the government would fulfill all promises made to the people during the Assembly elections.

CM Gupta provided a phone number for residents to send their suggestions, allowing them to directly con-

tribute to the budgetary decisions. She also emphasized that the government would focus on key promises such as financial support for women, pollution control, affordable and healthier food for the underprivileged, health facilities for the elderly, and the cleaning of the Yamuna River.

To ensure broad participation, Gupta mentioned that various sections of society would be consulted for their suggestions. "We've invited women's organizations from across Delhi on March 5, and educationists will also share their input the same day," she said. Trade unions were also invited on March 6 to contribute their suggestions.

Furthermore, CM Gupta assured the public that all ministers and MLAs would engage with the community to better understand their expectations from the budget. "We are committed to fulfilling all promises made to the people of Delhi," she added. To expedite the process, the Delhi government has instructed all officers to work through weekends.

Gupta also mentioned that while the government had less time to prepare for the budget, it was prioritizing public engagement over press conferences. Discussions on the CAG health report will take place in the Assembly today, signaling a proactive approach to governance in the final stages of budget preparation.

Congress Alleges BJP Manipulated Voter Rolls in 'EPIC' Controversy



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Congress on Monday accused the ruling BJP of attempting to manipulate elections by issuing multiple voter cards with identical Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers. The party claimed this exposes how the BJP "wins or attempts to win" elections by influencing electoral rolls with the "connivance" of the Election Commission (EC).

Describing the issue as a "grave danger to the very idea of India as an electoral democracy," Congress vowed to keep pressing for action. The party's 'Empowered Action Group and Experts' (EAGLE) asserted that "startling developments" show the EC's complicity in voter list manipulation. Congress alleged that

identical EPIC numbers have been assigned to multiple voters, both within the same constituency and across different states.

On Sunday, the EC acknowledged that some states have duplicate EPIC numbers due to an older "decentralized and manual mechanism" used before shifting electoral rolls to the ERONET system. However, it dismissed concerns about potential fake votes.

Congress stated that it will pursue legal, political, and legislative measures to address the issue and ensure fair elections. The controversy has sparked fresh concerns over electoral transparency, with opposition parties demanding greater accountability from the Election Commission.

HC asks ACB not to act till Mar 4 on order for FIR against ex-Sebi chief, Grants Urgent Hearing

Petitioners challenge special court's order

ACB directed not to act on FIR for now

Next hearing scheduled for Tuesday



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Bombay High Court on Monday directed the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) not to take any action until March 4 regarding a special court's order to register an FIR against former Sebi chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch and five other officials for alleged stock market fraud and regulatory violations.

Buch, along with Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) MD Sundararaman Ramamurthy and others, filed a petition in the Bombay High Court, seeking to quash the March 1 order by a special court, which had instructed the ACB to register an FIR. The case centers around allegations of fraud and regulatory lapses during the listing of a company on the BSE in 1994.

The petitioners, including Buch

and three current SEBI directors, Ashwani Bhatia, Ananth Narayan G, and Kamlesh Chandra Varshney, argued that the special court's order was arbitrary and illegal. They highlighted that they were not given an opportunity to present their side before the decision was made. Senior counsel Amit Desai, representing BSE officials Ramamurthy and Pramod Agarwal, also sought to quash the order, claiming it lacked legal grounds.

The Bombay High Court heard the plea urgently and scheduled a further hearing for Tuesday. The court also ordered that the ACB should not act on the special court's directive until the matter is fully heard.

The ACB court's March 1 order stated there was prima facie evidence of

2 PAGE

Mehbooba Mufti urges her MLAs to push for restoration of July 13 as holiday in J-K Assembly

PDP to introduce resolution in J&K Assembly session

Holiday was removed after Article 370 abrogation in 2019

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti has directed her party's Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to ensure that their resolution calling for the restoration of July 13 as Martyrs' Day is the first to be introduced in the upcoming Jammu and Kashmir Assembly session.

The resolution, which seeks to reinstate July 13 as a gazetted holiday in the region, is a significant part of the PDP's agenda. July 13 holds historical importance in Kashmir as Martyrs'



Day, commemorating the deaths of 22 people in 1931 who were killed by the forces during protests against the then ruling Dogra monarchy. This day was observed as a public holiday in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

However, after the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special sta-

tus in 2019 and the reorganization of the state into a Union Territory, the administration discontinued the official observance of Martyrs' Day. The resolution introduced by the PDP calls for restoring the holiday and formally recognizing the sacrifices made by those who died on July 13, 1931.

Mehbooba Mufti's push for this resolution highlights her party's stance on preserving the region's historical identity and its opposition to the changes brought about after the revocation of Article 370, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir. The PDP has long advocated for the protection of the region's rights and heritage in the face of administrative and political changes following the restructuring of the state.

The restoration of July 13 as Martyrs' Day is

2 PAGE

Arvind Kejriwal to Attend 10-Day Vipassana Session in Punjab

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal is set to attend a 10-day Vipassana meditation session in Punjab from March 5 to March 15. According to party sources, he will leave for Hoshiarpur on Tuesday to join the meditation course at a Vipassana center.



This retreat comes nearly a month after AAP lost power in Delhi following a major electoral setback.

Kejriwal had previously attended a similar session in December 2023 at the Dhamma Dhaja Vipassana Centre in Anandgarh,

2 PAGE

Union Minister Piyush Goyal Welcomes Princess Astrid Of Belgium In Delhi

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, welcomed Princess Astrid of Belgium upon her arrival in India on Sunday. The two delegations exchanged greetings, with Goyal presenting the Princess with a bouquet of white orchids as a symbol of hospitality.



Princess Astrid, the sister of Belgium's King Philippe, is in India for an official visit from March 2 to March 8. During her visit, she is scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. The Princess will also travel to several Indian states, including Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Delhi, as part of her diplomatic and economic mission.

The Princess is accompanied by a significant delegation of 335 members, including 180 companies. Belgium's Foreign Minister

Maxime Prevot, who also serves as the Deputy Prime Minister, is part of the delegation. According to Belgian Ambassador to India, Didier Vanderhasselt, this mission is the highest-level delegation Belgium has sent to India, emphasizing the growing importance of the relationship between the two countries.

Vanderhasselt also highlighted that the delegation's agenda includes at least 14 seminars and conferences focused on key sectors such as renewable energy, defense, eco-construction, life sciences, and steel decarbonization. These events aim to enhance collaboration and strengthen ties between India and Belgium, as well as between India and the European Union (EU).

The Belgian envoy emphasized India's impressive economic growth, which averages 5-7% annually, and described the country as a high priority for Belgium. He stressed that reliable global partners, like India, are crucial in today's geopolitical climate, and this mission signals the desire for a more strategic and robust partnership between Belgium and India. The economic mission reflects Belgium's commitment to fostering closer ties with India, particularly in key industries and sectors poised for future growth.

J&K LG Manoj Sinha Reaffirms Govt's Commitment to Statehood Demand

TPN Correspondent | Delhi



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha reaffirmed the government's commitment to fulfilling the statehood aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking at the first Budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly in seven years, Sinha emphasized that the session was not just a legislative formality, but a symbol of the government's dedication to good governance, transparency, and inclusive development in the region.

Sinha highlighted that the return of the Assembly's Budget session is a significant milestone, marking a new phase in the region's governance. He stated that this move reflects the government's commitment to addressing the political and developmental concerns of Jammu and Kashmir, ensuring that its people are actively involved in shaping the future of the region. The Lieutenant Governor also noted that the government is determined to work towards fulfilling the aspirations of the people, particularly in terms of restoring the state's full status.

The Budget session, which had been absent for several years, is viewed as a crucial step toward restoring the democratic processes in Jammu and Kashmir. It provides an opportunity for the elected representatives of the region to discuss key issues, including economic development, infrastructure, and public welfare, with an emphasis on addressing the needs of the people.

Sinha's remarks were seen as an important signal that the government is not only focused on governance but also on ensuring that Jammu and Kashmir's people are given a greater role in determining their political future. The commitment to statehood remains a key issue, and Sinha's statement reassured the people of Jammu and Kashmir that their aspirations would continue to be a priority in the government's policy agenda.

Centre is taking every possible effort to safeguard Indian fishermen: Jaishankar

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Union External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has assured BJP State President K. Annamalai that the Centre is taking every possible step to safeguard Indian fishermen, following concerns raised over the arrest of fishermen by the Sri Lankan Navy.

In his response to Annamalai's letter, Jaishankar emphasized that the safety and welfare of Indian fishermen remain a top priority for the government. He assured that the matter of the early release and repatriation of the fishermen is a subject that India consistently raises with the Sri Lankan government at various levels.

The Minister also highlighted that India has urged Sri Lanka to arrange the next round of fishermen-level talks, following the successful 6th Joint Working Group meeting on fisheries held in October last year. Jaishankar noted that since the beginning of 2024, India had successfully facilitated the release and repatriation of 535 Indian fishermen who had been arrested by foreign nations.



Annamalai, in his earlier letter, had urged Jaishankar's intervention for the swift repatriation of Tamil Nadu fishermen apprehended mid-sea by the Sri Lankan Navy.

Upon receiving Jaishankar's response, Annamalai expressed gratitude for the Union Minister's assurance, particularly regarding the safety and well-being of the fishermen.

The ongoing issue of Indian fishermen being detained by foreign maritime forces, particularly by Sri Lanka, has been a matter of concern for India. The Ministry of External Affairs has repeatedly sought to address these issues diplomatically and ensure that the rights and interests of Indian fishermen are protected through international dialogues and agreements.

1st Page Cont..

Arvind Kejriwal to Attend 10-Day Vipassana Session in Punjab

Hoshiarpur. His last meditation retreat coincided with his summons from the Enforcement Directorate in connection with a money laundering probe related to the excise policy. Since his defeat in the New Delhi constituency during the February 5 Assembly elections, Kejriwal has largely stayed away from public appearances, focusing instead on party-related activities.

The Aam Aadmi Party, which held power in Delhi from 2015 to 2024 with strong mandates, suffered a significant decline in the recent elections. AAP secured only 22 out of 70 Assembly seats,

while the BJP emerged victorious with 48 seats, ending AAP's dominance. Several prominent AAP leaders, including Manish Sisodia, Saurabh Bharadwaj, Satyendar Jain, and Somnath Bharti, faced defeat.

Kejriwal's Vipassana retreat is seen as both a personal and political move, allowing him time for reflection while the party strategizes its next steps. With AAP facing challenges on multiple fronts, including legal battles and political setbacks, its leadership will now work toward reinvigorating its influence in Delhi and beyond.

Mehbooba Mufti urges her MLAs to push for restoration of July 13 as holiday in J-K Assembly

seen by many as an important symbolic gesture in the region, especially for those who feel that the region's history and sacrifices have been undermined since the

reorganization. As the Assembly session nears, all eyes will be on whether the resolution receives the support of other political parties in Jammu and Kashmir.

HC asks ACB not to act till Mar 4 on order for FIR against ex-Sebi chief, Grants Urgent Hearing

regulatory lapses and possible collusion, and therefore, an impartial investigation was necessary. The case revolves around allegations that the accused were involved in the fraudulent listing of a company on the BSE, violating the SEBI Act of 1992.

Sebi responded to the order, indicating its intention to challenge the ruling and reaffirming its commitment to regulatory compliance. The BSE dismissed the application, calling it "frivolous and vexatious."

SC allows Ranveer Allahbadia to resume his podcast, but with conditions

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Supreme Court of India on Monday allowed YouTuber Ranveer Allahbadia, the founder of the Beer Biceps YouTube channel, to resume uploading his podcasts and shows on social media. This decision came after Allahbadia filed a petition, claiming that his online content creation was his sole source of livelihood.



The controversy surrounding Allahbadia began with his crass remarks on comedian Samay Raina's YouTube show, *India's Got Latent*. His comments led to public backlash and multiple FIRs being filed against him. Following the incident, the Maharashtra Cyber Crime department and Mumbai Police initiated investigations into the remarks, which were deemed inappropriate and offensive.

On Monday, Allahbadia, along with

fellow YouTuber Ashish Chanchlani, appeared separately before the Maharashtra Cyber department to record their statements in relation to the case of obscenity registered against them. During his statement, Allahbadia admitted that he had made a mistake by making controversial remarks during the show and acknowledged the criticism he faced as a result.

The podcaster further clarified that he had used inappropriate language and regretted his choice of words. Allahbadia explained that his appearance on Samay Raina's show was motivated by their friendship, and he did not charge any fee for attending the episode.

Despite the controversy, the Supreme Court's decision to allow Allahbadia to resume his online activities is a significant moment in the case. The ruling underscores the importance of the platform for the YouTuber's career while acknowledging the need for accountability over the remarks made during the show. As the investigation continues, Allahbadia has expressed regret for his actions, and it remains to be seen how the case will evolve in the coming weeks.

70% of Bullet Train Project Completed, Progress Accelerates in Maharashtra: Vaishnaw

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced on Saturday that over 70% of the bullet train project has been completed, with 360 km of the 508 km route now finished. He highlighted that significant progress has been made on the Maharashtra section, which had previously experienced delays due to a lack of timely permissions during the Uddhav Thackeray government's tenure.



Speaking in Ahmedabad, Vaishnaw expressed optimism about the project, stating, "The bullet train project is making good progress, with 360 km completed." He emphasized that the initiative is designed to not only provide a high-speed rail link between Mumbai and Ahmedabad but also create new economic hubs along the route. Cities such as Mumbai, Thane, Vapi, Surat, Vadodra, Anand, and

Ahmedabad will be interconnected, fostering growth and collaboration among them, he noted.

The Railway Minister described the bullet train as a catalyst for regional development, saying, "A bullet train should not be seen just as a means of transportation but as a project for the growth of the entire area." By connecting these key cities, the bullet train

project aims to boost economic activities and improve accessibility, thereby transforming the region into a cohesive economic zone.

Vaishnaw also provided an update on the Maharashtra section, which had been lagging due to earlier political delays. He reported that almost 2 km of the undersea tunnel, a critical part of the project, has been completed. While acknowledging that the Thackeray government had caused a two-and-a-half-year delay in the project, he assured that work is now progressing rapidly, with no further hindrances expected.

The bullet train project, which is one of India's most ambitious infrastructure undertakings, aims to revolutionize transportation between two major economic hubs, ultimately contributing to the country's modernization and growth.

BJP intensifies attack on AAP, raises CAG report on health in Delhi Assembly



cine procurement, purchasing drugs from blacklisted companies, including expired medicines, and failing to assess the need for new hospital beds.

"While people were struggling for oxygen, they were busy building palatial residences. Instead of providing proper healthcare, they allowed financial losses by procuring hospital medicines from local shops," Singh said, criticizing the government's priorities.

Ahead of the Assembly session, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta stated that the discussion on the CAG report would expose the "scams" of the AAP government. She said, "The AAP has already been exposed before the people of Delhi. Today, everyone is witnessing how AAP deceived them."

Gupta also highlighted that twelve more CAG reports were pending, hinting at additional irregularities that might come to light.

Meanwhile, Delhi Minister Ashish Sood joined the criticism, accusing the AAP government of failing to manage the city's healthcare and power infrastructure effectively. He claimed that the CAG report revealed numerous scams, including delays in implementing essential health services such as Mohalla clinics, which failed to meet the needs of the people during the COVID-19 crisis. Sood emphasized that Delhi's healthcare system, especially during the pandemic, had suffered due to a lack of preparedness and government negligence.

The CAG report revealed shocking deficiencies, including the failure to spend Rs 245 crore of the Rs 788 crore allocated for COVID-19 emergency response. Hospitals were found to lack critical facilities like ICU beds, oxygen supply, and staff, while major hospital projects suffered from delays and cost overruns.

of gross mismanagement in the healthcare sector, stating, "There is no one close whom Kejriwal hasn't betrayed."

Singh further alleged that the government had failed to implement quality checks on food served in hospitals and claimed its policies had forced people to migrate from the city. He also accused the AAP government of neglecting medi-

- Failed to utilize Rs 245 crore of COVID-19 emergency funds.
- Shortage of ICU beds, oxygen, and staff in hospitals.
- Accused Kejriwal of healthcare mismanagement and financial losses.
- Twelve more CAG reports may expose further irregularities.

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi Assembly erupted in heated exchanges on Monday as Delhi Minister Dr. Pankaj Singh launched a scathing attack on the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government over the findings of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report on health services in the national capital. Singh accused the AAP government

Shouldn't Be In Team': TMC MP Saugata Roy Backs Congress Leader's 'Fat' Remark On Rohit



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Saugata Roy on Monday backed Congress leader Shama Mohamed's controversial remark about Indian cricket team captain Rohit Sharma, which sparked massive backlash on social media. Mohamed had drawn flak after posting on Twitter on Sunday that Rohit Sharma was "fat for a sportsman" and needed to lose weight. She also criticized him as "the most unimpressive Captain India has ever had." The tweet followed Sharma's dismissal after scoring just 15 runs off 17 balls in a match against New Zealand during the ongoing ICC Champions Trophy.

Supporting Mohamed's statement, Roy emphasized that he agreed with her observation. "I agree with what she said about Rohit Sharma. She made the remark as a cricket viewer, not as a politician. For how long will Rohit Sharma be spared? He scored a century once, but now he just manages to score two, five, or ten runs. He shouldn't even be in the team," Roy said, criticizing

the captain's recent form in the tournament.

However, after facing intense criticism online, Shama Mohamed defended her comment, claiming that her tweet was not intended as body-shaming but was a general comment on fitness. "It was a generic tweet about the fitness of a sportsperson. I always believed a sportsperson should be fit, and I felt he was a bit overweight, so I just tweeted about that. I have been attacked for no reason," she explained. Mohamed further stated that she had the right to express her opinion in a democracy.

In response to the controversy, the Congress party distanced itself from Mohamed's remarks and asked her to delete the post. Party spokesperson Pawan Khera clarified that the comment did not represent the party's views, highlighting the Congress's respect for sporting icons. "She has been asked to delete the concerned social media posts and has been advised to exercise greater caution in the future," Khera added.

Tharoor's U-turn on Kerala industrial growth after 'praise' for Cong rival LDF

TPN Correspondent | THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Congress leader and Member of Parliament (MP) from Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram, Shashi Tharoor, recently expressed disappointment over the state's start-up ecosystem, urging for more genuine MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) start-ups rather than just theoretical claims. His remarks come after a report highlighting the closure of over 42,000 MSMEs in Kerala in the past nine years, leading to the loss of employment for more than 1,03,764 workers.

On Sunday, Tharoor shared the news article on social media platform 'X', calling attention to the disconnect between reported success stories and the actual state of the start-up ecosystem in Kerala. "Disappointed to see that the Kerala start-up entrepreneurship story is not what's been reported," he posted, highlighting the need for real growth and sustainability in the sector. He added that Kerala must focus on fostering more MSME start-ups and not just report them on paper.

Tharoor's comments come after a recent controversy sparked by his praise of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala for improving the investment cli-



mate. This generated backlash from some Congress party members who felt his remarks were too favorable toward the ruling party. Additionally, his comments on a Malayalam podcast about his ambitions for leadership in the state reportedly upset sections of the state Congress leadership, further fueling internal party tensions.

While Tharoor has been vocal about his concerns, Kerala's State Industries Minister P. Rajeev dismissed the news report shared by Tharoor as "baseless." Rajeev countered that Union Commerce and Industries Minister Piyush Goyal had stated in Parliament that only 1,700 MSMEs had shut down in Kerala over the past four years. He pointed out that the state's MSME closure rate was considerably lower than the national average of 30 percent, with Kerala's rate at 15 percent.

As Kerala approaches its assembly elections in March-April 2026, Tharoor's statements may stir further debate within the Congress party, which seeks to challenge the LDF government.

Akhilesh Slams Leaders' Push For 90-Hour Workweek: 'Replacing Humans With Robots'



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Samajwadi Party chief and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav has strongly opposed recent proposals by corporate leaders advocating longer work hours. Taking to social media, Yadav questioned whether employees are being treated as humans or machines, arguing that economic progress should be inclusive rather than benefiting only a privileged few.

In a post on X, he stated that when economic growth benefits only select individuals, the size of the economy—whether ₹30 trillion or ₹100 trillion—becomes irrelevant to the common people. He stressed that true economic justice ensures that prosperity is shared by all, something he believes is not happening under the BJP-led government.

Yadav's remarks come in response to statements made by Infosys founder Narayana Murthy and L&T Chairman SN Subrahmanyam. Murthy recently suggested that young Indians should work 70 hours a week to boost national productivity, while Subrahmanyam advocated for a staggering 90-hour workweek, even proposing that employees should sac-

rifice Sundays for work.

Challenging these views, Yadav highlighted the significance of rest and recreation in maintaining productivity. He pointed out that industries such as entertainment and cinema contribute significantly to the economy while also ensuring people feel refreshed and re-energized. He argued that improving work quality requires a balance between professional and personal life, not relentless overwork.

His criticism aligns with concerns raised by labor rights advocates who argue that excessively long work hours can lead to burnout, decreased efficiency, and mental health issues. Many economists and policymakers also believe that sustainable economic growth depends on fair wages, job security, and a supportive work environment rather than sheer labor hours.

By opposing extended workweeks, Yadav has positioned himself as a pro-worker leader, calling for policies that prioritize employees' well-being over corporate demands. His remarks reflect a broader debate on labor rights, work-life balance, and equitable economic development in India.

Thoughts Don't Align": J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Rules Out Alliance With BJP



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday clarified that there are no plans for an alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), reiterating that the two parties have different political visions. Speaking in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Abdullah emphasized that there is no need or scope for such an alliance, stating, "We are not talking about any alliance with the BJP; neither is there any scope nor the need. Our thoughts also do not align."

Abdullah made these comments while addressing the first Budget session of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, where he also took the opportunity to reflect on the contributions of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. He praised Singh's leadership, particularly in transforming India's economy during a challenging time. "Manmohan Singh ji was born

in undivided India. When he became finance minister, India was going through an economic crisis. Today, we are one of the biggest economies in the world, and private sector development surged after the license raj was dismantled," said Abdullah.

The Chief Minister also highlighted the welfare initiatives launched under Singh's tenure, such as the Indra Awas Yojana and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Abdullah recalled Singh's humility, sharing a personal anecdote from when he wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister. "He called me and pointed out an issue of protocol, even though he didn't need to," he said, further illustrating Singh's dedication to integrity.

Additionally, Abdullah discussed the significant progress made in resolving the Kashmir issue, mentioning the efforts of Singh and former Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. He also pointed out several infrastructure projects initiated by Singh, including the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway and the construction of the world's highest railway bridge, now being continued by the current government.

Delhi CM Rekha Gupta Declines 'Sheesh Mahal,' PWD Proposes Three Alternatives



- proposes three alternative bungalows on DDU Marg
- CM currently stays in her private home in Shalimar Bagh
- Move aligns with Gupta's focus on austerity and responsible governance

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has declined the opulent official residence, referred to as "Sheesh Mahal" by the BJP, prompting the Public Works Department (PWD) to identify alternative accommodations. The department has short-listed three bungalows for her consideration—two on Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Marg in central Delhi and one on Rajpur Road in the Civil Lines area of north Delhi.

The two bungalows on DDU Marg are located near the Delhi BJP office and the BJP national headquarters, while the Rajpur Road property is in the historically significant Civil Lines neighborhood. All three options meet the necessary security requirements for the Chief Minister's Z-category protection.

CM Gupta currently resides in her private home in Shalimar Bagh, her home constituency. She will finalize her choice after evaluating the proposed bungalows, after which the General Administration Department will formalize the allocation.

The luxurious official residence, dubbed "Sheesh Mahal," had drawn criticism due to its multi-crore renovation costs. Gupta's deci-

sion to reject the bungalow aligns with her campaign's emphasis on austerity and transparency. A BJP leader, speaking anonymously, stated, "Her decision reflects her commitment to responsible governance and financial prudence."

Political analysts believe this move could strengthen public trust, especially given the controversies surrounding the previous administration's spending on extravagant renovations. "By rejecting the 'Sheesh Mahal,' CM Gupta is sending a strong message that her government prioritizes public welfare over personal luxury," the BJP leader added.

Apart from selecting a new residence for the CM, the PWD is also responsible for arranging accommodations for six ministers, the Assembly Speaker, and the Deputy Speaker. A total of eight additional bungalows will be allocated as per government housing regulations.

Gupta's decision to decline the lavish residence is being viewed as a symbolic move reinforcing her stance on responsible governance. As she prepares to finalize her new official residence, her actions continue to highlight her commitment to transparency and fiscal discipline.

Delhi Experiences Cold Weather and Moderate Air Quality

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi experienced clear skies and cold northwesterly winds, which caused the minimum temperature to drop to 9.6°C, a full four degrees below normal. This drop in temperature follows the record-breaking warmth of 19.5°C on February 27, the highest February minimum in 74 years. The temperature on Sunday was slightly higher at 14.2°C.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) attributed the temperature dip to the prevailing cold northwesterly winds, which are expected to keep the maximum temperature from rising significantly. While the maximum temperature reached 27°C on Sunday, it had been 28.6°C the previous day. On Monday, the maximum temperature was forecasted to be between 28-30°C but was expected to dip to 25-28°C from Tuesday to Friday as the cold winds persisted. Winds of 20-30 km per hour are expected to continue through Tuesday and Wednesday. The minimum temperature for the rest of the week is expected to range between 14-17°C.



Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality remained in the "moderate" category for the fourth consecutive day. The Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 124 (moderate) at 9 a.m. on Monday, slightly lower than the 125 recorded at 4 p.m. on Sunday. The Early Warning System for Delhi (EWS) has predicted that the air quality will remain in the "moderate" range until at least Wednesday, with the AQI likely to fluctuate between "moderate" and "poor" for the following six days.

The AQI scale classifies air quality as follows: 0-50 (good), 51-100 (satisfactory), 101-200 (moderate), 201-300 (poor), 301-400 (very poor), and over 400 (severe). Despite the moderate air quality, the ongoing cold winds are expected to keep pollution levels relatively stable for the time being.

A Delhi Man's Race Against Time and the Kindness of Strangers



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A man in Delhi, Mr. Shubh, experienced a nerve-racking 45 minutes while attempting to catch a train, but thanks to the kindness of strangers, he made it in time.

In a post on X, Mr. Shubh shared that he was trying to catch a train from Delhi Cantonment railway station to make it to his dad's birthday. He had promised his father he would be there. Initially,

he bargained with an auto driver who quoted Rs 150, settling on Rs 130 for the ride. The journey started smoothly, but soon things took an unexpected turn.

As the auto arrived at a station, Mr. Shubh realized it wasn't Delhi Cantt but New Delhi Railway Station. It was 6:10 AM, the exact departure time of his train from New Delhi. Desperate, he checked Google Maps, which showed that Delhi Cantt was 30 minutes away. There was no way he could make it on time.

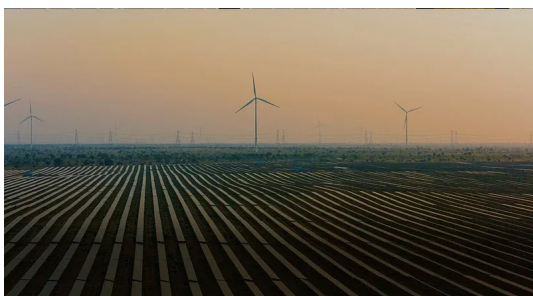
Panic set in as he pleaded with the auto driver to take him to Delhi Cantt. The driver explained that it was 15 km away and that he was out of fuel. Just when things seemed hopeless, a stranger's act of kindness changed everything.

The auto driver flagged down another vehicle, where a woman in her 60s was already seated. Though hesitant at first, she agreed to take Mr. Shubh to Delhi Cantt after hearing his story. During the ride, she reassured him, telling him not to worry, and that they would reach on time.

Despite the initial rush, they arrived at the station at 6:39 AM, just as the train was about to depart. Mr. Shubh's foot landed on the train's step as it began to move. Grateful for the kindness he had received, he reflected on how showing kindness, even to those who don't always deserve it, is always worth it.

The episode was a reminder of the power of small acts of kindness when least expected.

Adani Green Energy Refinances \$1.06 Billion For Maiden Construction Facility In Rajasthan



TPN Correspondent | Rajasthan

Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) announced on Monday that it has successfully refinanced \$1.06 billion to develop India's largest solar-wind hybrid renewable energy cluster in Rajasthan, marking another significant milestone in the company's capital management strategy.

This refinancing pertains to the company's initial construction facility of \$1.06 billion, which was taken in 2021. The long-term financing raised for this project comes with a 19-year tenor and a fully amortized debt structure that aligns with the asset's lifespan, according to the statement from AGEL.

The refinancing has been supported by the company's strong operational performance, which earned it an AA+/stable rating from three domestic rating agencies. With this step, AGEL has completed its capital management program for its

renewable energy portfolio. The program is focused on securing long-term facilities that are well-aligned with the cash flow lifecycle of its renewable assets.

AGEL's innovative approach has opened access to diverse capital sources, enabling it to secure substantial sums with long-term durations. The company emphasized that this strategy strengthens its financial stability while supporting continued growth and sustainable value creation for its stakeholders.

Currently, AGEL operates a renewable energy portfolio of 12.2 GW, the largest in India, spread across 12 states. With a goal to reach 50 GW by 2030, the company is aligned with India's decarbonization targets. Recently, AGEL surpassed a new record of 12,000 MW in operational capacity, following the commissioning of an additional 275 MW solar capacity at the Khavda plant in Gujarat, the world's largest renewable energy project.

AGEL's 12,258.1 MW operational portfolio consists of 8,347.5 MW in solar, 1,651 MW in wind, and 2,259.6 MW in wind-solar hybrid capacity. The company has operationalized a cumulative 2,824.1 MW of renewable energy capacity at Khavda, further cementing its leadership in India's renewable energy sector.

Delhi High Court Rejects Complete Ban on Student Mobile Phones in Schools

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court has ruled that a complete ban on students using mobile phones in schools is "undesirable and unworkable," emphasizing the need for a balanced approach in regulating smartphone use. Justice Anup Jairam Bhambani, in a February 28 order, highlighted the importance of a structured policy that allows students to carry phones for essential purposes while preventing misuse.

While acknowledging the potential harms of unrestricted smartphone use, the court recognized that mobile phones play a vital role in ensuring student safety and facilitating communication with parents. The ruling pointed out that smartphones can be beneficial for educational and emergency purposes. "As a matter of policy, students should not be barred from carrying smartphones to school...the use of smartphones in schools must be regulated and monitored," Justice Bhambani stated.



The court further noted that mobile phones have become integral tools for students' education, with many schools using technology for learning purposes. Despite concerns over the negative effects of excessive smartphone use, such as distractions and the risk of cyberbullying, the court stressed the need to find a middle ground that balances these risks with the benefits smartphones offer.

The judgment is a response to concerns raised by various stakeholders about the growing de-

pendence on mobile phones in educational settings. The court's decision calls for the development of guidelines that allow students to use their phones in a controlled manner, ensuring that they are utilized for educational purposes and essential communication rather than entertainment or distraction.

In conclusion, the Delhi High Court rejected a blanket ban on mobile phones in schools, urging authorities to create a framework that ensures the responsible use of smartphones by students.

World Wildlife Day: PM Modi Announces Asiatic Lion Census In May



- Foundation laid for wildlife referral center in Junagadh
- Rs 2,900 crore allocated for Project Lion conservation

TPN Correspondent | Punjab

On World Wildlife Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the seventh meeting of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) in Sasan, Gujarat, where he announced the 16th Asiatic lion population estimation to take place in May 2025. This announcement follows his morning safari at Gir National Park, which is home to the Asiatic lion.

During the meeting, PM Modi laid the foundation stone for the National Referral Centre-Wildlife in Junagadh and unveiled a book on river dolphins. Additionally, he announced the establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Human-Wildlife Conflict Management at SACON in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.

The NBWL, which advises the gov-

ernment on wildlife conservation, comprises 47 members, including state representatives, NGOs, and chief wildlife wardens. The Prime Minister serves as the ex-officio chairperson, with the Union Environment Minister acting as the vice-chairperson.

In his post on X (formerly Twitter), PM Modi praised the steady rise in the population of Asiatic lions, attributing this success to collective efforts, especially from local tribal communities and women living near the Gir Forest. Modi reflected on his past work as Gujarat's Chief Minister, noting that these efforts have led to significant wildlife conservation achievements.

Modi also highlighted the increased populations of other species, including tigers, leopards, and rhinos, emphasizing India's commitment to creating sustain-

able habitats for wildlife. The government has approved more than Rs 2,900 crore for Project Lion, a conservation initiative focused on preserving the Asiatic lion, which is found only in Gujarat.

The lion's habitat spans nearly 30,000 square kilometers across 53 talukas in nine districts of Gujarat. The state government has also introduced measures, including a Standard Operating Procedure with the Railways, to prevent lion-related accidents on railway tracks.

During his three-day Gujarat visit, PM Modi also visited the Somnath Temple, offered prayers, and toured Vantara, an animal rescue and rehabilitation center for elephants and wildlife at the Reliance Jamnagar refinery.

Over 20 Firearms Surrendered in Manipur Amid Ethnic Strife



TPN Correspondent | Manipur

In a continued effort to restore peace in the ethnic strife-torn state of Manipur, more than 20 firearms were surrendered by the public across four districts on Sunday, March 2, 2025. The firearms were handed over to authorities in Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, and Jiribam districts, as part of ongoing efforts to reduce the prevalence of illegal weapons in the region.

In Imphal East, three firearms, including two 9mm pistols, were surrendered at the SDPO office in Porompat. In Bishnupur, four firearms, three grenades, and additional ammunition were handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF). Firearms were also surrendered at police stations in Jiribam, Wangoi, and Sekmai, as per reports from local police officials.

The surge in voluntary firearm surrenders follows an appeal made by Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla on February 20, 2025, urging warring factions to return weapons they had looted from security forces or had otherwise illegally obtained. Governor

Bhalla initially set a seven-day deadline for the surrender, during which over 300 firearms were returned, primarily from the valley districts.

Recognizing the complexities of the situation, Bhalla extended the deadline for weapon surrenders until 4 p.m. on March 6, 2025, following requests for more time from both hill and valley communities. The extended timeline aims to allow more individuals to voluntarily return firearms and contribute to the peace-building process in the state.

Since ethnic violence erupted between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities in May 2023, more than 250 people have been killed, and thousands have been displaced. The conflict has escalated tensions, with both communities seeking control over various regions. On February 13, 2025, President's rule was imposed in Manipur after Chief Minister N. Biren Singh resigned. The state assembly has since been put under suspended animation, while the central government continues efforts to address the crisis.

Punjab Police Demolish Illegal Structures in Anti-Drug Operation in Jalandhar

TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh

In a concerted effort to combat the ongoing drug menace, Punjab Police, in collaboration with local authorities, demolished unauthorized structures built by drug smugglers in Jalandhar's Phillaur on March 2, 2025. The operation targeted illegal encroachments on village panchayat land in Khanpur and Mandi villages, which had been occupied by individuals with a history of narcotics trafficking.

The demolition operation was initiated after a request from the Block Development and Panchayat Officer (BDPO) of Phillaur, who sought police assistance to remove the unlawful structures. The structures were found to be linked to two notorious drug smugglers—Jasvir Singh, alias Sheera, from Khanpur, and Bholi from Mandi. Both individuals have been involved in several drug-related crimes in the past.

Jasvir Singh has been implicated in multiple cases, including one involving the possession of commercial quantities of charas and

narcotic injections. Bholi, a well-known drug smuggler, has a long criminal record, including the seizure of 1.190 kg of smack in 2005, a two-kg poppy husk recovery in 2015, and significant drug seizures in 2022.

According to Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Harkamal Preet Singh Khakh, the demolition was carried out smoothly with the help of police, revenue, and panchayat officials. Adequate security was provided to prevent any disturbances during the operation, which was conducted to dismantle encroachments linked to the drug trade. The SSP emphasized that these individuals had routinely intimidated and threatened local villagers, further contributing to their criminal activities.

Authorities confirmed that the encroached land rightfully belongs to the gram panchayat and was unlawfully occupied by the accused. The SSP assured the public that the police would continue their crackdown on criminal networks involved in illegal occupations and drug trafficking, ensuring no one benefits from such unlawful activities.



Karnataka Braces for Hotter Summer: Health Advisory Issued for Residents

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Karnataka is gearing up for an unusually hot summer, with temperatures expected to exceed normal levels from March to May, potentially leading to heatwave conditions across several regions of the state. In light of the extreme weather predictions, the state Health Department has issued an advisory urging residents to take necessary precautions as temperatures are forecasted to reach 37-39°C.

The advisory recommends staying well-hydrated, wearing loose cotton clothing, and using hats or umbrellas to shield from the sun. It also advises against outdoor activities between noon and 3 pm when the heat is most intense. Prolonged exposure to high temperatures can cause heat-related illnesses such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, particularly among vulnerable groups like infants, pregnant women, outdoor workers, and individuals with pre-existing medical conditions.

Employers have been instructed to ensure that workers have access to drinking water and shade to prevent heat-related illnesses during outdoor work.

According to the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre, north interior Karnataka and the coastal districts are expected to experience above-normal maximum temperatures. Bengaluru, south interior Karnataka, and the Malnad region will see near-normal levels of heat. Minimum tem-



peratures across the state are also predicted to remain high. Heatwave conditions may last between two and 14 days, especially in north interior Karnataka, beginning as early as March.

In coastal Karnataka, where the India Meteorological Department has issued heatwave alerts for March 2 and 3, hot and humid conditions are expected to continue into March 4 and 5.

The advisory emphasizes the importance of frequent hydration, even when not feeling thirsty, and suggests carrying drinking water while traveling. It also recommends beverages like ORS, lemon water, buttermilk, and fruit juices with added salt, along with water-rich foods such as watermelon, muskmelon, oranges, cucumbers, and lettuce.

To minimize health risks, authorities advise avoiding strenuous outdoor activities between 12 pm and 3 pm. If outdoor work is unavoidable, it should be rescheduled to before 11 am or after 4 pm. For outdoor events, shaded areas, good air circulation, and access to drinking water should be ensured.

With extreme summer conditions approaching, residents are urged to stay vigilant and take the necessary precautions to stay safe and healthy.

Punjab Govt announces Rs 200 crore one-time settlement for industrialists

TPN Correspondent | Rajasthan

In a move aimed at supporting local industrialists, the Punjab government, led by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), has approved a one-time settlement (OTS) policy to help clear outstanding dues on industrial plots allotted before January 2020. This new initiative will provide a significant relief of Rs 200 crore to industrialists who struggled to meet their financial obligations due to increased land costs.

The policy was approved during a meeting of the Punjab Council of

Ministers, chaired by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. Punjab Industries Minister Tarunpreet Singh Sond and Rajya Sabha member Sanjeev Arora, AAP's candidate for Ludhiana West, outlined the details of the policy following the Cabinet meeting. Arora had previously briefed the Chief Minister about the demands of industrialists, which led to the formulation of the new scheme.

The OTS policy is expected to benefit around 1,145 industrialists, with outstanding dues totaling Rs 330 crore. These dues were

pending for plots allotted by the Punjab State Industrial Export Corporation (PSIEC). Under the new arrangement, industrialists will only need to



pay simple interest at an 8% rate by December this year, with the government waiving off both compounding and penal interest charges.

Additionally, another OTS scheme has been approved for over 2,500 parent allottees of industrial plots across state focal points. These industrialists, who have not been able to pay their principal amounts, can now settle their dues by paying the same 8% simple interest, while penal and compounding interest will also be waived.

The long-standing issue of outstanding dues had been unresolved for over three decades, particularly affecting industrialists in Ludhiana, Mohali, and Jalandhar. This decision is seen as a major step towards easing the financial burden on local businesses.

This is the third significant initiative by the AAP government, following its recent crackdown on drug-related issues and efforts to address corruption in the state. These moves come as the AAP works to strengthen its position after electoral challenges in Delhi.

Gangadhar Rao Proves Sri Vari System Can Revolutionize Rice Farming



Rice is a staple food in South India, and its cultivation plays a crucial role in the region's agricultural economy. However, the traditional method of cultivating rice in wetland conditions has become increasingly expensive due to rising labor costs and high water consumption. On average, a farmer requires 3,500 liters of water to produce just one kilogram of rice. Additionally, traditional rice farming demands 25 to 30 kilograms of seeds per acre, and yields generally range between 30 and 40 quintals per acre.

In this context, an innovative method known as the Sri Vari system, or the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), has emerged as a sustainable and high-yield approach. This method minimizes water usage while maximizing output, making it a viable solution for modern farmers. Recognizing the potential of this system, a young farmer from Dendulur village in Eluru district, Ramachellu Gangadhar Rao, has successfully adopted and implemented it on 30 acres of farmland.



Sri Vari System: A New Era in Rice Cultivation

The Sri Vari system is an alternative method of rice farming that focuses on optimal spacing, minimal water usage, and organic farming practices. Unlike conventional methods, which require continuous water storage in each furrow, this system ensures that the soil remains moist but not flooded.

Some key principles of the Sri Vari system include:

- Minimal seed usage: Instead of 25 to 30 kg of seeds per acre, only 2 to 3 kg of seeds are needed.
- Transplanting younger seedlings: Rice seedlings that are 8 to 14 days old are transplanted, ensuring faster and healthier growth.
- Proper plant spacing: A gap of 25 cm is maintained between each plant, which enhances root development and increases nutrient absorption.
- Use of mechanical weeders: A cone weeder or rotary weeder is employed from 10 days after planting, reducing weed growth and aerating the soil.
- Water management: The field is kept moist but without excess water accumulation, significantly reducing water consumption.



The Benefits of Sri Vari System

Higher Yields: The method results in improved tillering, leading to higher grain production per plant. Farmers have reported an increase in yield, surpassing 50 to 60 quintals per acre, compared to traditional methods that yield around 30 to 40 quintals.

- Water Conservation: By avoiding continuous water submergence, water consumption is reduced by up to 50%.
- Cost-Effective: With reduced seed requirements and minimal labor dependency for irrigation, the overall cultivation cost decreases.
- Better Soil Health: The use of organic practices and natural soil aeration methods helps maintain soil fertility.
- Climate Resilience: The system enhances plant resilience against drought conditions, making it a sustainable choice in regions facing erratic rainfall.
- Gangadhar Rao's success with the Sri Vari system has set an example for other farmers in the region. As more cultivators explore this innovative approach, the potential for sustainable and profitable rice farming in Andhra Pradesh continues to grow.



Success Story of Gangadhar Rao

Gangadhar Rao, a progressive farmer from Eluru, has been implementing the Sri Vari system on his 30-acre land, which consists of fertile carbon-rich soil. He selected BPT-2595, a long-duration rice variety that takes 160 days to mature. By adopting the 1 x 1 full-sediment method under the Sri Vari system, he has achieved remarkable results. In his fields, only 2 to 3 kg of seeds are used per acre, and seedlings are carefully planted following the specified spacing pattern. The method not only enhances crop productivity but also ensures better soil fertility through natural processes.



Trump-Zelensky Showdown: No, Putin Is Not The Winner Here

The public confrontation between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and U.S. President Donald Trump in the Oval Office has sparked significant ripple effects that will be felt in the short to medium term. While many have already analyzed the incident itself, it's now essential to consider its broader implications.

For Ukraine, the fallout is severe. Zelensky's bold stand against Trump may have bolstered his nationalist image domestically, but it has come at a high cost. Despite visiting the U.S. with the goal of securing security guarantees, the spat has likely jeopardized Ukraine's relationship with its most important ally. The U.S., which has been crucial in providing military and financial support, may now be less inclined to continue its aid. The Ukrainian military, already struggling against a much larger Russian force, finds itself in a more vulnerable position with its security prospects diminished.

For the U.S., the public clash has tarnished its global reputation. Washington's inability to secure vital resources from Ukraine, such as rare earth elements, and its failure to maintain a consistent foreign policy strategy, particularly regarding Russia, undermine the U.S.'s position as a global leader. Trump's handling of the situation—mixing personal grievances with national interests—has cast the U.S. as an unpredictable and unreliable ally. Moreover, his defense of Vladimir Putin, despite past investigations into Russian interference in U.S. politics, only deepens doubts about his impartiality and leadership.

Putin, often seen as the beneficiary of such disputes, may not emerge as the clear winner. While the U.S.-Ukraine rift weakens Kyiv, it also complicates Moscow's own ambitions. A prolonged conflict and continued Western sanctions are not in Russia's interest, and a potential European military bloc opposing Russian aggression could prove formidable.

The Legacy of Jihadism: From Sayyid Ahmad's Jihad to Modern Extremism



In 1852, the renowned poet and astrologer Momin Khan Momin met an untimely demise, falling from his terrace in Delhi. Despite his dreams of joining the jihadist movements rising in India's North-West, Momin's fate was quietly sealed in a cemetery, far from the martyrdom he had envisioned. His poetry, once filled with eroticism and adoration of Venus, now turned toward a fervent desire for martyrdom, revealing the complex relationship between personal faith, identity, and the broader forces of jihadism that would soon shape the region.

Last week, a suicide bombing at the Darul Uloom Haqqania seminary in Akora Khattak, Pakistan, epitomized the current state of jihadist extremism that has roots in the very religious foundations Momin yearned to be part of. The seminary, which has historically been a hub for jihadist thought, saw its leader, Hamid Ul Haq Haqqani, targeted by extremists within its own fold. Haqqani had attempted to mediate between Pakistan's government and the Taliban factions, trying to isolate the anti-Pakistan jihadists of the Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) and Islamic State. While no group has taken responsibility, factions sympathetic to the Islamic State have expressed their approval, underlining the deep ideological schism within jihadist groups that once drew strength from institutions like Darul Uloom Haqqania.

India's Global Image: The Link Between Domestic Policy and Foreign Relations

A fundamental lesson in foreign policy is that it often reflects a country's domestic values. The ideals a nation practices within its borders—such as justice, equality, and law—are generally mirrored in its foreign policy decisions and actions. When a country promotes human rights and democratic values abroad, it must demonstrate the same commitment at home. This domestic-foreign policy dichotomy can have significant consequences for a nation's global standing.



The United States in the 1990s is an example of how domestic values can influence global leadership. The U.S. promoted a liberal world order that mirrored its democratic, multicultural

ethos. Its inclusive society, commitment to rule of law, and focus on scientific and technological innovation propelled its leadership role in the international system. American uni-

versities became global benchmarks for education, attracting international students who saw the U.S. as a land of opportunity. The country's soft power, driven by its inclusive culture and

strong governance, made it an attractive destination for talent and investment.

However, under Trump's administration, the U.S. has begun to reverse this trajectory, with implications for its role in the liberal world order. A shift away from inclusivity and openness undermines the U.S.'s global appeal, damaging its soft power and its ability to lead the world. Soft power is not just about culture; it's about creating a society where justice, equality, and scientific inquiry are central to governance. Without this, soft power strategies become less effective, and in some cases, may backfire.

India faces a similar challenge, particularly in its quest for soft power. While India envisions a liberal and inclusive global order, its domestic system has yet to fully shed its hierarchical and exclusionary practices. This contradiction poses a significant obstacle to India's rise as a global leader, particularly in the developing world. Recent events, such as the mishandling of a student's suicide in a private university, turned into an international crisis, highlighting the disconnect between India's global aspirations and its domestic challenges. If the issue had been addressed with justice and empathy, it could have been resolved without turning into a diplomatic embarrassment.

We take pride in India's contributions towards preserving, protecting wildlife: PM Modi

- PM Modi reaffirms India's biodiversity commitment
- UN-proclaimed day highlights endangered species and habitat loss
- India active in tiger, elephant conservation and anti-trafficking
- Global cooperation key to preserving biodiversity for future



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

On World Wildlife Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated India's commitment to protecting and preserving the planet's extraordinary biodiversity. Reflecting on the significance of the day, Modi took to social media to highlight the importance of safeguarding the world's wildlife and ecosystems.

"Today, on #WorldWildlifeDay, let's reiterate our commitment to protect and preserve the incredible biodiversity of our planet," Modi said, reinforcing the need for global cooperation in conservation efforts.

World Wildlife Day, observed every year on

March 3, was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly during its 68th session on December 20, 2013. The day serves as a global platform to celebrate and raise awareness about the diverse wildlife and ecosystems across the globe. It also aims to highlight the critical role wildlife plays in maintaining the health of the planet and the well-being of humanity.

The theme of World Wildlife Day changes annually, focusing on various aspects of wildlife protection. This day serves as a reminder of the need to protect endangered species and the habitats they depend on, as well as the growing challenges posed by human activities like deforestation, pollution, and climate change.

Prime Minister Modi's message underscores India's active role in global conservation efforts, with initiatives focused on preserving the nation's rich biodiversity, including its tiger and elephant populations. India has also been a key player in international environmental discussions, advocating for more effective actions to combat wildlife trafficking and habitat destruction.

As the world celebrates World Wildlife Day, leaders, conservationists, and individuals alike are reminded of the shared responsibility to ensure the survival of wildlife for future generations. With collective effort, the protection and preservation of global biodiversity remain an attainable goal.



Jaishankar to embark on 6-day visit to UK, Ireland to boost trade and bilateral ties

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is set to embark on a six-day official visit to the United Kingdom and Ireland from March 4 to 9. The trip holds significant importance as India and the UK have recently initiated discussions on a free trade agreement (FTA), and Jaishankar's visit is expected to play a crucial role in shaping the future of bilateral relations between the two nations.

India and the UK have long shared a comprehensive strategic partnership that has strengthened in recent years across multiple domains. These include defense and security cooperation, trade and economic ties, healthcare, education, and people-to-people connections. The UK is one of India's most important economic partners, and the ongoing talks on an FTA are expected to boost trade and investment between the two countries. Jaishankar's visit to the UK is anticipated to set the tone for continued collaboration, ensuring that both nations can build on this momentum for mutual benefit.

During his visit to the UK, Jaishankar will meet with his UK counterpart, Foreign Secretary David Lammy. He is also expected to hold discussions with other senior government officials, exchange views on important regional and global issues, and strengthen the ongoing cooperation in various sectors. Additionally, Jaishankar will engage with members of the Indian diaspora, which plays a vital role in fostering ties between India and the UK.

Jaishankar will then travel to Ireland on March 6-7 to further solidify the growing friendly bilateral relations between India and Ireland. The two countries share common democratic values and deep cultural ties, which have served as the foundation for their robust relationship. Economic cooperation between the two nations is also expanding, and Jaishankar will meet with his Irish counterpart, Simon Harris, and other dignitaries to explore opportunities for further collaboration. He will also engage with the Indian community in Ireland to promote people-to-people ties and enhance mutual understanding.

Jaishankar's visit is a key step in strengthening India's diplomatic outreach and reinforcing partnerships with two important European nations.

Have Babies Now: MK Stalin's Message For Newlyweds Is A Delimitation Jab



TPN Correspondent | Chennai

In a sharp sarcastic response to the Centre's proposed delimitation plans, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin humorously urged newlywed couples to start planning families immediately to ensure the state's representation during the upcoming exercise. At a wedding function in Nagapattinam, where he was attending a DMK district secretary's wedding, Stalin quipped that while he had previously advised newlyweds to take their time before starting a family, the government's delimitation plans had forced a change of approach. "We focused on family planning and succeeded, but now, with policies like delimitation being proposed by the Union Government, we cannot say that anymore. I now urge newlyweds to have children immediately and give them good Tamil names," Stalin said.

The DMK, under Stalin's leadership, has been outspoken in its opposition to the Centre's delimitation exercise, which is expected to occur after 2026. Delimitation involves redrawing the boundaries of parliamentary and assembly constituencies to reflect demographic changes over time. Stalin argued that southern states, including Tamil Nadu, could be at a disadvantage since these states had successfully implemented family planning policies. He claimed that this population control would lead to fewer seats for the south in Parliament, despite their contribution to India's economic growth and welfare. In response, BJP spokesperson CR Keshavan dismissed Stalin's remarks as "desperate and dishonest diversionary drama." Keshavan pointed out that the DMK was silent on Rahul Gandhi's call for "Jitni Abadi, Utna Haq" (rights proportional to population), which he said directly contradicted the DMK's stance on population-based delimitation.

Paytm Faces ED Show Cause Notice Over Alleged FEMA Violations

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Shares of One 97 Communications (OCL), the parent company of Paytm, dropped 4.4% to an intraday low of Rs 685 on the BSE on Monday following a show cause notice from the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The notice, linked to alleged violations of foreign exchange rules under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), involves transactions worth Rs 611 crore, impacting Paytm and two of its subsidiaries.

According to Paytm's regulatory filing with the BSE on Saturday, the ED identified non-compliance of Rs 245 crore in OCL, Rs 345 crore in Little Internet, and Rs 20.9 crore in Nearbuy India. The notice, dated February 27, was received by the company on Friday evening. While Paytm did not provide further details about the nature of the violations, the company stated that it has been cooperating with authorities and will respond appropriately.

The development comes at a time when Paytm is already under regulatory scrutiny. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had recently imposed restrictions on Paytm

Payments Bank, barring it from accepting fresh deposits after March 15 due to compliance concerns. This has led to increased volatility in Paytm's stock, which has declined significantly since the RBI's directive.

Market analysts believe that the ED's show cause notice adds to investor concerns over Paytm's regulatory challenges. The company has been facing pressure to strengthen compliance and address governance issues. The ongoing scrutiny could impact its operations and business confidence, particularly as it seeks to assure stakeholders about its financial health.

In response to the ED notice, Paytm reiterated its commitment to full compliance with regulatory requirements. The company assured investors and customers that its core businesses remain unaffected and that it continues to work with regulators to resolve any outstanding concerns.

With this latest development, market observers will closely monitor Paytm's next steps, particularly how it addresses compliance issues and reassures investors amid growing regulatory pressure.

ED HAS ISSUED SHOW CAUSE NOTICE (SCN) TO M/S ONE97 COMMUNICATION LTD (PARENT COMPANY OF PAYTM), AND ITS MANAGING DIRECTOR AND OTHERS FOR THE CONTRAVENTIONS OF PROVISIONS OF FEMA, 1999.



Bhutan PM Tshering Tobgay on India-Bhutan Relations and High-Value Tourism

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

In an exclusive interview with Divya A, Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay discussed the unique and trusting relationship between Bhutan and India, emphasizing the importance of high-value tourism while also expressing caution about over-tourism in the country. Tobgay highlighted that despite Bhutan's small size, its relationship with a powerful neighbor like India is rooted in genuine goodwill, with no hidden interests.

Tobgay spoke about the concept of high-value tourism, a key aspect of Bhutan's strategy to maintain its cultural and environmental integrity while welcoming visitors, particularly from India. While the country does value tourism and seeks to increase footfall, it does not want to overwhelm its infrastructure or lose its essence by opening the floodgates to mass tourism.



During the virtual interaction from Thimphu, ahead of the release of his book *Enlightened Leadership* (Penguin), which reflects on Bhutan's transition from a monarchy to a democracy, Tobgay also discussed the trust and cooperation between India and Bhutan. He addressed

concerns regarding potential trust deficits in the relationship, emphasizing that the two nations share a deep bond built on mutual respect and understanding.

Tobgay's relationship with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was also a topic of discussion. He acknowledged the personal rapport between the two leaders, which has helped strengthen bilateral ties, especially in areas like trade, security, and regional cooperation. Tobgay reiterated Bhutan's commitment to preserving its sovereignty while benefiting from India's support, reinforcing the long-standing friendship between the two nations.

As Bhutan navigates the challenges of modernization and global engagement, the Prime Minister remains focused on maintaining the balance between progress and preservation, ensuring that Bhutan's unique identity remains intact for future generations.

Bangladesh has no option but to have good ties with India: Muhammad Yunus

- Yunus reaffirmed the close relationship between the two nations.
- He acknowledged some conflicts due to misinformation but emphasized efforts to resolve misunderstandings.
- Bangladesh seeks a meeting between Yunus and PM Modi during the April 3-4 event in Thailand.



TPN Correspondent | Bangladesh

Bangladesh's interim government chief, Muhammad Yunus, reaffirmed the importance of maintaining strong relations with India, stating that both countries are deeply interconnected and reliant on each other. His remarks came ahead of the upcoming BIMSTEC Summit in Thailand on April 3-4, where Bangladesh is keen to arrange a meeting between Yunus and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In an interview with BBC Bangla, Yunus acknowledged that "propaganda" has led to "some

conflicts" between the two nations but emphasized that efforts are being made to overcome any misunderstandings. He did not specify the source of this alleged propaganda but stressed that both countries remain in constant communication, with regular high-level visits strengthening diplomatic ties.

Describing India-Bangladesh relations as "very good," Yunus dismissed concerns of any deterioration, asserting that the two neighbors have no option but to maintain close cooperation. "There has been no deterioration, our relations will always be good. They are good now and they will

be good in the future," he said.

Yunus further highlighted the historical, political, and economic ties that bind the two nations, making isolation impossible. Over the years, India and Bangladesh have engaged in trade, security cooperation, and cultural exchanges, further cementing their partnership.

The upcoming BIMSTEC Summit is expected to serve as a platform to discuss key regional issues, with Bangladesh looking to reinforce its strategic ties with India amid evolving geopolitical dynamics.



Trudeau to bring up Trump's threat to annex Canada in meeting with King Charles

TPN Correspondent | Seoul

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is set to meet with King Charles III on Monday to discuss the ongoing threat posed by US President Donald Trump to make Canada the 51st state. The meeting comes after growing criticism in Canada of the monarch's silence regarding these provocative remarks from Trump.

In a statement made in London on Sunday, Trudeau emphasized the importance of addressing issues crucial to Canadians, particularly focusing on "standing up for our sovereignty and our independence as a nation." Canada, as a member of the British Commonwealth, recognizes King Charles as its head of state. However, the monarch's recent silence on Trump's threats has sparked renewed debate on Canada's relationship with the monarchy.

While Canada's anti-royal sentiment remains relatively small, the issue has gained traction following the lack of comment from King Charles regarding Trump's controversial remarks. The US President's suggestion that Canada could be annexed has raised concerns, particularly among those who feel the monarch should take a firmer stance on defending Canadian sovereignty. Former Alberta Premier Jason Kenney weighed in on the matter, stating that for those in Canada who are disappointed by King Charles' silence, it's important to remember that the monarch acts on the advice of the Canadian government. Kenney urged the Canadian government to ask King Charles to make a statement underscoring the nation's independence.

King Charles has recently met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and despite the controversy, he has invited Trump for a state visit to Scotland. Constitutional lawyer Lyle Skinner also weighed in, expressing hope that Trudeau's upcoming audience with the king would lead to a public statement reaffirming Canada's sovereignty.

As Trudeau prepares for his meeting with the king, the issue of Canadian independence and the monarchy's role in defending it is expected to be a key point of discussion.

Permit Cancellations, Financial Burden: Canada's New Visa Rules Impact Indian Students



TPN Correspondent | Canada

Canada has recently implemented stricter immigration and visa policies aimed at reducing illegal migration, significantly impacting Indian students pursuing higher education. Since the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations took effect on January 31, several students have reported sudden permit cancellations, intensified scrutiny of visa applications, and stricter enforcement of departure requirements. Nikhil Jain, founder of Foreign-Admits, mentioned that many students, despite having strong academic records, have lost their permits. Jain projected that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) could revoke permits for up to 7,000 students this year, potentially affecting the 427,000 Indian students currently in Canada.

If a student's permit is revoked, they may be required to leave Canada unless they can successfully appeal the decision. However, the legal fees for such appeals start at C\$1,500, with no guarantees of success. "We are advising our clients to meticulously document everything, including every hour worked and every address change, which must be reported within seven days," said Jain. "Canada's shift from a welcoming stance to a more suspicious approach means students must adapt quickly." This tightening of immigration policies has also led to a significant reduction in study permits issued to Indian students, with a 40% drop since the fourth quarter of 2023. Additionally, the new C\$20,635 Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) requirement for Fall 2025 applicants has become a financial hurdle for many middle-class Indian families.

Replacing Me Will Not Be Simple": Ukraine President Zelensky

TPN Correspondent | Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has responded to suggestions from US Republicans that he may need to step down, offering a candid defense of his leadership. In an interview with British media, Zelensky acknowledged that replacing him as president would not be straightforward, reiterating his willingness to step down in exchange for NATO membership for Ukraine.



This statement comes after a dramatic shift in US politics, with former President Donald Trump turning against Zelensky during a contentious Oval Office meeting about the ongoing war with Russia. During this meeting, Trump and several Republican figures questioned Zelensky's leadership, suggesting that his personal and political motivations might be hindering efforts to end the conflict. National Security Advisor Mike Waltz emphasized the need for a leader who could negotiate with Russia and end the war, suggesting that if Zelensky's goals diverged from this objective, it could become problematic.

In his response, Zelensky remarked, "If they replace me, given what is going on, given the support, simply replacing me will not be simple." He added that holding elections

and preventing him from running would not be sufficient, hinting that any potential replacement would need to engage in negotiations with him. Zelensky also repeated his stance on NATO membership, saying, "I am exchanging for NATO. Then I fulfilled my mission."

The tensions with the US escalated following the Oval Office meeting, where Zelensky left without securing a preliminary agreement on Ukrainian mineral rights. While European leaders continue to support Ukraine,

the US Republican Party has raised concerns over Zelensky's leadership, with Speaker of the House Mike Johnson stating that Zelensky either needs to "come to his senses" or be replaced.

Despite the controversy, Zelensky remains steadfast in his calls for NATO membership, an issue that has been a major point of contention since Russia's invasion of Ukraine three years ago. The alliance has been hesitant to offer Ukraine membership, fearing further escalation with Russia.

UK Investigates TikTok, Reddit, and Imgur Over Children's Data Privacy Concerns

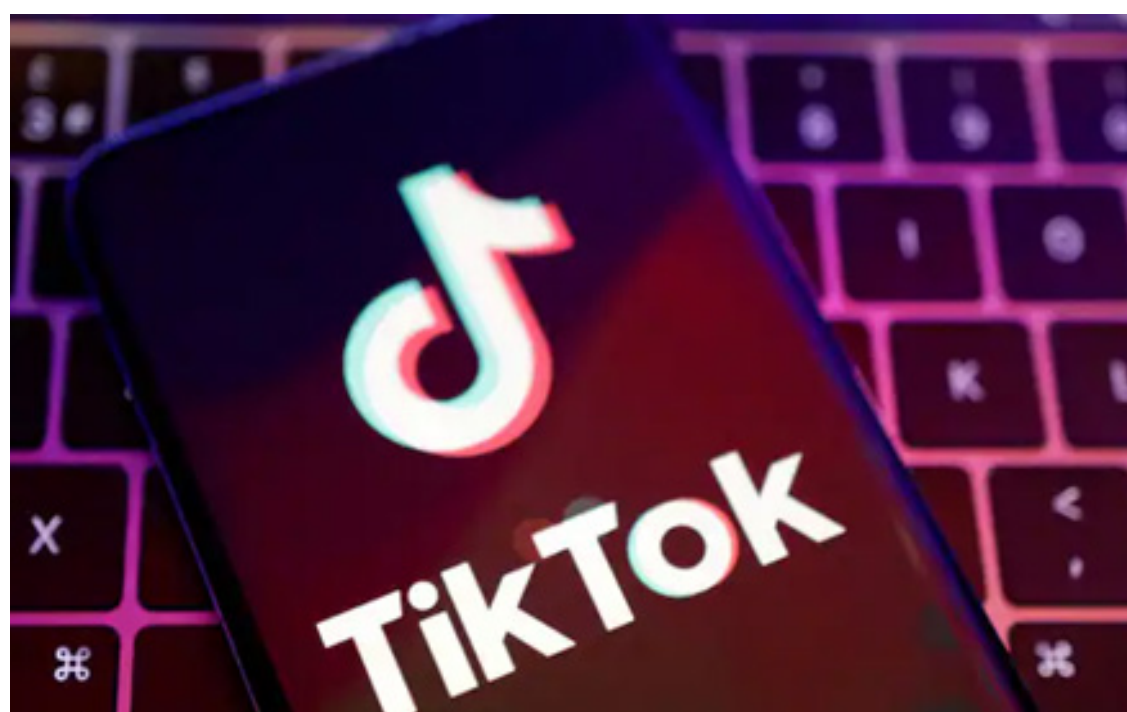
TPN Correspondent | UK

Britain's privacy watchdog, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), has launched an investigation into how popular social media platforms, including TikTok, Reddit, and Imgur, handle children's personal data. The inquiry focuses on how these platforms safeguard the privacy of young users, particularly those aged 13-17, and the role of algorithms in suggesting content based on personal information.

The ICO's investigation targets TikTok's practices around using personal data to recommend content to young users, as concerns grow over the platform's influence on minors. The watchdog is examining whether TikTok's algorithm unduly amplifies content, leading to potential exposure to harmful material. The ICO is also scrutinizing how Reddit and Imgur assess and handle the ages of their users, ensuring that they comply with privacy laws protecting children.

In a statement, the ICO emphasized that if sufficient evidence is found that any of the companies have breached data protection laws, it will take the necessary steps to address the issue. This could involve presenting findings to the companies and seeking their responses before concluding the investigation.

The UK's approach to safeguarding children's



online privacy has been evolving, with stricter rules being implemented in recent years. Legislation now mandates social media platforms to prevent children from accessing inappropriate or harmful content. This includes measures such as enforcing age limits and implementing age-verification processes. The UK government has also proposed measures requiring platforms to adjust their algorithms to filter or reduce the visibility of harmful content, offering greater protection

to younger users.

While TikTok, Reddit, and Imgur have not yet responded to requests for comment, this investigation highlights the growing concern over how social media platforms use personal data, especially when it comes to vulnerable groups like children. With the ICO's probe, the UK is further tightening its oversight of digital platforms, aiming to ensure they prioritize user safety, particularly for minors.

Stock Markets Close Flat After Intraday Recovery Amid Global Uncertainty

Domestic stock markets ended nearly flat on Monday after recovering from early losses driven by global uncertainty and weak signals from Asian and international markets. The morning session saw a sharp decline in benchmark indices as investors reacted to negative cues. However, buying interest emerged later in the day, fueled by optimism over economic recovery, increased consumption, and strong agricultural production in the third quarter. Sectors like metal, realty, healthcare, and pharma provided key support. Despite the recovery, the Nifty ended the session with a marginal loss of 5 points, while the Sensex closed 112 points lower.



The BSE Sensex, which had closed at 73,198 in the previous session, opened higher at 73,427. However, it dropped to an intraday low of 72,784 before rebounding to a high of 73,593. Eventually, the index settled at 73,085, down 112 points. The NSE Nifty opened at 22,194, touched a low of 22,004 and a high of 22,261, before closing at 22,119, down 5 points. Meanwhile, the Nifty Bank index lost 230 points, ending at 48,114. Analysts noted that Nifty faces resistance at 22,300 and has support at 22,000.



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Within the Nifty50, 33 stocks advanced while 17 declined. Gains were led by IT, metal, realty, healthcare, pharma, and consumer stocks. Banking, media, oil, and gas sectors remained under pressure. Among the top gainers were BEL, Grasim, Eicher Motors, JSW Steel, and BPCL. Meanwhile, Bajaj Auto, Coal India, Reliance, Bajaj Finserv, and HDFC Bank were the biggest losers.

Market breadth on the NSE strongly favored sellers, with 2071 stocks declining compared to 880 gainers out of the

3026 traded. Additionally, 12 stocks hit 52-week highs, while 963 touched 52-week lows. Shares of 357 companies hit their lower circuit limits.

On the currency front, the rupee strengthened by 15 paise, closing at 87.36 against the US dollar. In stock-specific movements, Morgan Stanley assigned an overweight rating to International Gemological with a target price of ₹617. Jefferies maintained a buy rating on Polycab India but lowered its target price from ₹7700 to ₹6485.

Welspun Living's stock surged 8.87% to ₹116. Indian Overseas Bank hit a 52-week low for the second consecutive day after receiving a ₹699 crore demand notice. Jio Finance saw 10 lakh shares change hands. The mutual fund corpus of women investors has doubled over the past five years.

In corporate updates, Piramal Enterprises received a GST notice worth ₹1502 crore. Dalmia Bharat announced a ₹3520 crore investment in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank completed the sale of its stressed loan portfolio. United Drilling secured an ₹80 crore order from Oil India, while NCC won a ₹218 crore project from a state government.

India on Track to Meet Fiscal Deficit Target of 4.8% for FY25

The central government is expected to achieve its fiscal deficit target of 4.8% of GDP for the financial year 2024-25 (FY25), according to a recent report by Bank of Baroda. The report attributes this to a combination of higher-than-expected nominal GDP growth, stable revenue receipts, and controlled expenditure.



The report highlights three key factors supporting the government's fiscal consolidation efforts. First, the nominal GDP growth rate for FY25 is projected to be 9.9%, slightly higher than the 9.7% estimated in the Union Budget. A higher GDP growth rate typically enhances revenue collections, thereby assisting in managing the fiscal deficit target.

Second, government expenditure patterns have played a crucial role. Due to the general elections, spending remained subdued in the first half of the fiscal year. However, in the latter half (H2), the government increased its spending, ensuring that overall expenditure remained within budgetary limits. This controlled spending approach has helped in maintaining fiscal discipline while supporting economic activities.

Third, steady revenue receipts have strengthened the government's fiscal position. Direct tax collections, including corporate and personal income

tax, have shown resilience, while indirect taxes such as Goods and Services Tax (GST) have continued to generate robust revenue. Additionally, non-tax revenues from dividends, disinvestments, and asset monetization have provided supplementary financial support.

The Bank of Baroda report suggests that with these factors in place, the government is well-positioned to achieve its fiscal deficit target without requiring major policy adjustments. It also notes that maintaining fiscal prudence is essential to ensure economic stability while continuing to invest in infrastructure, social welfare, and other priority sectors.

Overall, the government's focus on balancing growth and fiscal responsibility appears to be yielding positive results. By managing expenditures efficiently and leveraging strong revenue collections, the central government is expected to remain on course to meet its fiscal deficit target, reinforcing confidence in India's economic resilience.

India's Manufacturing Growth Slows in February, PMI Drops to 56.3

India's private sector manufacturing activity, as measured by the HSBC Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), slowed to 56.3 in February 2025, reflecting the slowest sales growth in over a year. This marks a decline from January's reading of 57.7, according to HSBC's latest report. Despite the slowdown, the PMI remained in expansion territory for the 44th consecutive month, as a reading above 50 indicates growth.



The manufacturing sector experienced a dip in momentum, with both sales and output falling to a 14-month low. Factory activity levels had previously reached a 12-month low in December but showed a temporary rebound to a six-month high in January. However, February saw a renewed deceleration, primarily due to subdued domestic demand.

HSBC's India Chief Economist, Pranjul Bhandari, noted that strong global demand continued to support the manufacturing sector, encouraging firms to increase purchasing activity and expand their workforce. "Business expectations remained very strong, with nearly one-third of survey participants anticipating higher output volumes in the year ahead. Although growth slowed to the weakest level since December 2023, overall momentum remained broadly positive," she stated.

Despite the slowdown, manufacturers ob-

served an increase in new orders, particularly from international markets. Export demand remained robust in February, contributing to job creation as firms responded to higher overseas orders. The steady expansion in hiring reflects an overall positive business outlook despite temporary challenges.

However, manufacturers faced rising input costs, with prices increasing for raw materials such as bamboo, rubber, and leather. Additionally, expenses related to marketing and telecom services also rose, putting pressure on production costs. Companies responded by passing on a portion of these costs to consumers through higher pricing. Labour costs also increased, further adding to the financial burden on manufacturers.

Meanwhile, India's overall industrial output growth declined to a four-month low of 3.2% in February. While the manufacturing sector remains on a growth trajectory, cost pressures and fluctuating domestic demand continue to shape the industry's outlook in 2025.

Paytm Shares Drop Over 4% After ED Notice on Alleged FEMA Violations

Shares of One97 Communications, the parent company of Paytm, plunged over 4% on Monday (March 3, 2025) after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) issued a notice regarding alleged violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). The notice pertains to investment transactions involving Paytm and its subsidiaries, Little Internet and Nearbuy.

On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), Paytm's stock dropped 4.39% to ₹683.55 per share, while on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), it fell 4.37% to ₹685 per share. The broader market also saw declines, with the BSE Sensex slipping 271.22 points to 72,926.88, and the NSE Nifty falling 93.60 points to 22,031.10.

In a regulatory filing on February 1, 2025, Paytm disclosed that it had received the ED notice concerning alleged FEMA contraventions from 2015 to 2019. The violations reportedly involve Paytm's acquisition of Little Internet Private Limited (LIPL) and Nearbuy India Private Limited (NIPL), formerly Groupon India.

One97 Communications clarified that some of the alleged breaches occurred before LIPL and NIPL became its subsidiaries. The notice does not specify financial penalties but references transactions totaling over ₹611 crore. According to Paytm, the alleged violations include ₹245 crore linked to One97 Communications, ₹345 crore related to LIPL, and ₹21 crore concerning NIPL.



Paytm emphasized that the issue does not impact its services, assuring users that all operations remain fully functional and secure. The company is seeking legal advice to address the matter and explore appropriate remedies.

The fintech giant acquired Little Internet and Nearbuy in 2017. Groupon India, which later became Nearbuy, was initially launched in 2011 by Ankur Warikoo. Warikoo and the core management team took over the business in 2015, making it an independent entity before its eventual acquisition by Paytm.

As the regulatory investigation unfolds, Paytm remains focused on resolving the matter in compliance with legal requirements. Despite the stock decline, the company reiterated its commitment to ensuring uninterrupted service for its consumers and merchants.

Apple's AI-Powered Siri May Be Delayed Until iOS 20 in 2027

Apple is reportedly facing challenges in upgrading its Siri assistant to the level showcased at its Worldwide Developer Conference (WWDC) 2024. According to a report from Bloomberg's Mark Gurman, the tech giant is working to roll out the first set of artificial intelligence (AI) features for Siri by May 2025. However, this version is expected to fall short of the expectations set by the demo, with the full implementation potentially taking until 2027 with the release of iOS 20.

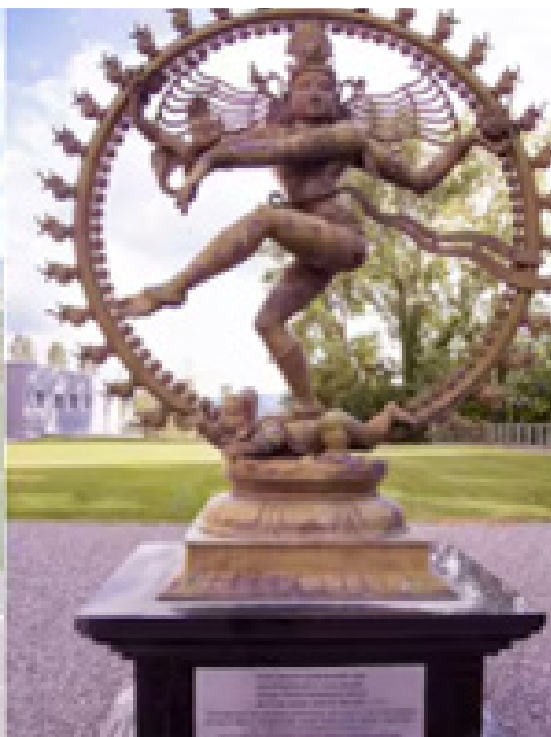
The new AI-powered version of Siri is expected to integrate user data and apps for more complex tasks. Currently, Apple's AI features have seen low real-world usage, with many users finding them non-essential. The new Siri will combine the legacy Siri system with a new AI-driven brain, but this combination may result in a less-than-smooth experience, according to Gurman. Apple is planning to merge these systems in the future, potentially with a new architecture for Siri that could debut with iOS 19.4 in 2026, though that release is also reportedly delayed. Internally, the new Siri is referred to as "LLM Siri" and will bring more conversational ca-



pabilities to the virtual assistant. However, Apple's original plan to release the fully upgraded Siri in 2026 as part of iOS 19 is now pushed to 2027 with the release of iOS 20. To expedite development, Apple recently moved Kim Vorrath, a seasoned software executive, to the AI and machine learning division. Vorrath previously oversaw soft-

ware development for the Vision Pro. The struggles with Siri and the delays in its rollout could even put the future of John Giannandrea, Apple's Senior Vice President of Machine Learning and AI Strategy, at risk. Giannandrea, who previously served as SVP of Engineering at Google, is reportedly under scrutiny as the delays continue.

The Fascinating Connection Between Lord Shiva and CERN's Nataraj Statue



began in the 1960s. It was unveiled on June 18, 2004, by Dr. Robert Aymar, the Director-General of CERN, and other prominent figures, including Dr. Anil Kakodkar, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. At the time, Dr. Manmohan Singh served as India's Prime Minister.

In Hindu mythology, Nataraj represents Lord Shiva as the cosmic dancer whose dance, known as Tandava, symbolizes the perpetual cycle of creation, preservation, and destruction. This ancient concept mirrors the work done at CERN, where scientists study the "cosmic dance" of subatomic particles, examining the fundamental forces and building blocks of the universe.

The Nataraj statue at CERN is more than an artistic creation; it bridges mythology with science. The metaphor of Shiva's cosmic dance is akin to the rhythms observed in physics, where forces of creation and destruction constantly play out. Fritjof Capra, a physicist, highlighted this connection in his 1970s book *The Tao of Physics*, drawing parallels between the cosmic dance and the discoveries made at CERN. The statue's presence at CERN serves as a powerful reminder that ancient wisdom and modern science can complement each other, fostering a deeper understanding of the universe's mysteries. It exemplifies how mythology and physics intersect in the pursuit of knowledge.

As Maha Shivratri approaches, a unique link between Hindu mythology and modern science is highlighted by the Nataraj statue at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research in Switzerland. The 2-meter-tall bronze statue, gifted by the Government of India in 2004, symbolizes the deep connection

between the ancient Hindu deity Lord Shiva and the cutting-edge research conducted at CERN, including the discovery of the Higgs boson and the invention of the World Wide Web. The statue, crafted by Tamil Nadu artist Rajan, was a gift from India to celebrate the ongoing collaboration between India and CERN, which

Baker Sets Guinness World Record for Icing 66 Cupcakes in Three Minutes

Michelle Evans-Fecchi, renowned for her appearance on *The Great British Bake Off*, has set a new Guinness World Record by icing an astonishing 66 cupcakes in just three minutes. This impressive feat showcases her exceptional speed and precision in the art of baking.

The record-breaking moment was shared on the official Guinness World Records Instagram, where viewers were treated to a video of Evans-Fecchi effortlessly decorating cupcakes with flawless buttercream swirls. The cupcakes were neatly arranged in front of her, and with each rapid motion, she expertly iced one after another, hitting the remarkable total of 66 in under three minutes. The caption accompanying the post noted, "Most cupcakes iced/frosted in three minutes (individual) 66 by Michelle Evans-Fecchi for @S4C."

The achievement has stunned many in the baking community, as icing cupcakes is often a delicate and time-consuming task that requires attention to detail. Yet Evans-Fecchi's extraordinary speed not only broke the record but also demonstrated the level of skill and efficiency that can be attained with years of practice.

The video has gone viral, with countless viewers expressing their awe and admiration for her talent. The internet is abuzz



with reactions, with many questioning how she managed to achieve such a high number in such a short time. While some fans celebrated her impressive record, others expressed amazement at her flawless technique, which ensured that each cupcake was perfectly decorated despite the rapid pace.

Evans-Fecchi's record has added another feather to her cap, further solidifying her status as one of the baking world's most talented and innovative figures. Her achievement also highlights the combination of speed and artistry required to excel in the highly competitive world of baking.

Scientists Develop Device to Taste Food in Virtual Reality



Imagine experiencing the flavor of a delicious cake without even taking a bite. A team of scientists at The Ohio State University has made this possible with a revolutionary device that brings taste into virtual reality (VR). The 'e-Taste' interface enables users to perceive flavors remotely through sensors and wireless chemical dispensers, marking a breakthrough in VR experiences.

The 'e-Taste' system uses advanced sensors and wireless dispensers to simulate gustation (the sense of taste). The device works by distinguishing molecules like glucose and glutamate, which represent the five basic tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and umami. Researchers confirmed that it could digitally replicate a range of taste intensities during field tests, offering a unique and safe way to experience taste remotely. The taste sensations are triggered when the system collects data through electrical signals and transmits it wirelessly to a remote device for flavor replication.

Jinghua Li, co-author of the study and assistant professor of materials science and engineering at Ohio State, emphasized that taste and smell have been largely underexplored in VR and augmented reality (AR) environments. "We've developed this next-generation system to fill that gap," she said, highlighting the potential for future advancements in immersive experiences.

The device, inspired by Li's previous work in biosensors, features an actuator with two key components: an interface for the mouth and a small electromagnetic pump. The pump connects to a liquid channel containing chemicals that vibrate when an electric charge passes through. This vibration pushes the solution through a gel layer into the user's mouth, where the intensity and flavor of the taste can be adjusted based on digital instructions. The system can also release multiple tastes simultaneously to create complex flavor sensations.

This breakthrough opens new possibilities for gaming, healthcare, and accessibility, providing a more immersive and interactive experience for users. The study detailing the development of this technology was published in the journal *Science Advances*.

Viral Roti-Making Hack Divides the Internet



A woman's viral video showing a hack to make multiple rotis in one go has left the internet divided. The video, which has amassed 2.1 million views, demonstrates a quick and efficient way to flatten several rotis at once, sparking a mix of admiration and skepticism online.

In the video shared by @theonly_nitish on X, the woman begins by placing a clean plastic sheet on the kitchen counter. She then takes a dough ball, places it on the sheet, and covers it with another plastic sheet. This process is repeated with 6-7 dough balls, followed by a final sheet on top. The woman then uses a rolling board (chakla) to apply pressure over the stacked dough balls, flattening them simultaneously. The result? A set of perfectly round rotis, each flawlessly flattened without sticking together, thanks to the layers of plastic sheets. Once flattened, she simply separates the discs and

prepares the rotis as usual.

While the hack seems like a game-changer for speeding up roti preparation, it has generated mixed reactions. Many viewers were impressed by the simplicity and efficiency of the technique, applauding the woman for her ingenuity. However, others were skeptical about the practicality of the hack, questioning whether it would work consistently and if it would truly save time in a typical kitchen setting.

Despite the mixed feedback, the video has sparked a lively debate, with some praising the creative approach to an age-old kitchen task, while others argue that traditional methods are still the most reliable. The viral video serves as a reminder of how social media can bring innovative solutions to light, even if not everyone is convinced. Whether or not this hack will become a common kitchen practice remains to be seen.

Rohit Sharma Refutes Home Advantage Claims Ahead of Semifinal Clash



Rohit Sharma has dismissed claims that India's participation in the ICC Champions Trophy, with all matches played in Dubai, gives his team an unfair home advantage. Speaking ahead of India's semifinal clash against Australia, Rohit emphasized that the conditions in Dubai have presented various challenges, not advantages. Several former players, including those from Pakistan, Australia, and England, suggested that India's early arrival in Dubai allowed them to better acclimatize. However, Rohit refuted this, clarifying that Dubai is not India's home ground. "Every time, the pitch is giving you different challenges. This is not our home; we

don't play so many matches here. It is new for us too," he stated. Rohit also highlighted the need for adaptability, particularly in their last match against New Zealand, where both swing and spin played crucial roles. He expressed his preference for a balanced contest between bat and ball. Furthermore, he justified India's inclusion of five spinners in the squad, referencing observations from the ILT20 tournament that indicated slow bowlers could be effective in Dubai's conditions. He also noted that arriving early in Dubai allowed the team to adjust well, with good training sessions in the lead-up to the matches.

Praggnanandhaa Draws with Aravindh Chithambaram at Prague Masters



Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa played to a draw against fellow Indian Aravindh Chithambaram in the fifth round of the Prague Masters chess tournament, maintaining a full-point lead over the nearest challengers. Both players have accumulated 3.5 points, staying ahead of top seed Wei Yi of China, Anish Giri of the Netherlands, Quang Leim Le of Vietnam, and Vincent Keymer of Germany,

all with 2.5 points. The tournament follows a 10-player round-robin format, with four rounds remaining. The day's action saw just one decisive game, with Wei Yi defeating Sam Shankland. Anish Giri drew with Nguyen Thai Dai Van, and David Navara fought back to hold Keymer. Praggnanandhaa and Aravindh played a Berlin Defense, leading to a drawn rook and pawns endgame.

FIFA Lifts Suspension on Pakistan Football Federation After Constitutional Reforms

FIFA has lifted the suspension on the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) after the federation made the necessary constitutional changes to ensure effective governance of football in the country. The suspension, imposed on February 5, was due to the failure of PFF Congress members to amend the constitution as required by FIFA. However, after a consensus was reached on the amendments last Thursday, FIFA confirmed the suspension was lifted on Sunday. Since June 2019, Pakistan football has been under the governance of a FIFA-appointed normalisation committee, tasked with resolving internal disputes and conducting elections. Despite several changes in leadership, key issues in Pakistan football remained unresolved. An AFC senior official visited Lahore last week to facilitate the constitutional changes, which were subsequently approved



by PFF Congress members. With the suspension lifted, Pakistan will now be eligible to participate in the 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers, with their first match against Syria on March 25.

WWE's Plan for John Cena's Heel Turn at Elimination Chamber Shocks the World



John Cena stunned the WWE Universe with a shocking heel turn on Cody Rhodes at the WWE Elimination Chamber on March 2, setting the stage for his upcoming WrestleMania 41 match against Rhodes. Cena secured his spot at WrestleMania by defeating CM Punk in the six-man Elimination Chamber match, and reports indicate that WWE had been planning this heel turn for weeks. In a surprising twist, after Cody Rhodes aggressively rejected The Rock's demand to become the 'Corporate Champion', Cena, who had been congratulating Cody for staying true to himself, suddenly turned on him. Cena, with a throat-cutting signal from The Fi-

nal Boss, aligned with The Rock and kicked Rhodes, leaving him incapacitated on the mat. The shocking moment was compounded by rapper Travis Scott, who slapped Rhodes while he was down. Reports suggest WWE had planned Cena's heel turn as the third act of the event, but it was rescheduled to follow the Men's Elimination Chamber match. While there were rumors about Drew McIntyre winning, Cena's heel turn surprised even WWE officials. After the event, Triple H, WWE's Chief Content Officer, revealed that very few people were aware of Cena's turn, and he played a significant role in the segment.

Emma Navarro Dominates Emiliana Arango 6-0, 6-0 to Win WTA Merida Open



Top-seeded American Emma Navarro clinched her second WTA title with a dominant 6-0, 6-0 victory over qualifier Emiliana Arango in the final of the WTA Merida Open on Sunday. Navarro, who was seeded No. 1 for the first time, com-

pleted an impressive week by securing the 500-level crown without dropping a set. This win adds to the title she won in Hobart last year. The match lasted just 55 minutes, as Navarro overpowered Arango, becoming the

first player since Iga Swiatek in 2021 to win a WTA final 6-0, 6-0. Arango, ranked 133rd in the world before the tournament, made history by reaching her first WTA quarter-final and is set to enter the top 100 in the upcoming rankings.

Major League Soccer: Lionel Messi Rests, But Inter Miami Triumph 4-1 in Texas

Lionel Messi was rested for Inter Miami's Major League Soccer match against the Houston Dynamo on Sunday, but his absence didn't affect his team's performance. Inter Miami cruised to a dominant 4-1 victory, with Telasco Segovia scoring twice. Coach Javier Mascherano decided to leave Messi in Florida to rest after a busy start to the season, leaving many ticket buyers in Houston disappointed. To make up for Messi's absence, the Dynamo offered free tickets to another game later in the season. Unfortunately for Houston, their defense was overly generous, allowing Miami to score four goals. Miami's first came early when Benjamin Cremaschi pressured Houston's defense, and Segovia capitalized on the mistake. Houston responded with some possession but were caught on

the counter-attack in the 37th minute as Tadeo Allende made it 2-0. Just before halftime, Segovia scored again to put Miami in a commanding 3-0 lead. Houston's Ezequiel Ponce had a header ruled out for offside, and Miami added another goal in the 79th minute with a brilliant strike from Luis Suarez. Houston managed to pull one back in the 85th minute with a goal from Nicolas Lodeiro, but the match ended in a comprehensive win for Miami. Despite the red card for Ian Fray in the final moments, Miami showed their potential to dominate the Eastern Conference this season. Luis Suarez spoke after the game, emphasizing the team's determination to go all the way this year after last season's painful playoff loss to Atlanta.





Sonakshi Sinha Set for Telugu Debut in Supernatural Fantasy Thriller 'Jatadhara'



Sonakshi Sinha, known for her impressive Bollywood career, is gearing up for her Telugu cinema debut with the upcoming supernatural fantasy thriller *Jatadhara*. Directed by Venkat Kalyan,

the film is said to blend mythology with supernatural elements in an intriguing narrative. While official confirmation is awaited, sources suggest that Sonakshi will star opposite Sudheer Babu,

and filming is set to begin on March 8, 2025, following a grand mahurat event held recently in Hyderabad.

Sonakshi's versatile filmography includes hits like *Dabangg*, *Dahaad*, and *Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar*, earning her widespread acclaim. *Jatadhara* marks an exciting new chapter in her career, bringing her to the Telugu film industry.

In addition, Sonakshi's critically acclaimed film *Lootera* is set for a re-release on March 7, 2025, allowing fans to revisit the 2013 period drama, where she starred alongside Ranveer Singh.

Nani's 'Paradise' Glimpse Unveiled with Powerful Teaser



Nani's upcoming film *Paradise* has created a buzz with the release of its intense "Ra Statement" glimpse. Known for his soft love stories, Nani has recently ventured into mass roles with films like *Shyam Singha Roy* and *Dasara*. In *Paradise*, he takes on a rugged, rustic role. Directed by Srikanth Odela, the teaser features a

powerful voice narrating a gripping story of a ravenous crow, a struggling community, and the rise of a leader. The glimpse showcases Nani in a completely different avatar, with a high dose of bloodshed, violence, and intense dialogues. The film, said to be made on a large budget, is scheduled for a pan-India release on March 26, 2026.

'Chhaava' Telugu Trailer Released: A Power-Packed Epic Awaits



The Telugu trailer for *Chhaava*, starring Vicky Kaushal and directed by Lakshman Utekar, has been released, sending chills down the spine with its intense visuals. Based on the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's eldest son, Sambhaji Maharaj, the film is a historical epic that has already made waves in the Bollywood market. Released on February 14, *Chhaava* received rave reviews and has

been a box-office hit. The film is now being presented in Telugu by the prestigious Geetha Arts, with the release scheduled for March 7. The trailer, full of awe-inspiring visuals, blends courage and glory, promising an epic cinematic experience. With goosebump-inducing scenes, *Chhaava* is set to captivate Telugu audiences just as it did in Hindi, building anticipation for its release.

Shruti Haasan Talks About Her International Debut in 'The Eye'



Shruti Haasan is all set to make her international debut with *The Eye*, a supernatural thriller set against the stunning backdrop of Greece. Directed by Daphne Schmon and produced by Fingerprint Content, the film premiered at the 5th Wench Film Festival, a platform dedicated to horror, sci-fi, and fantasy genres.

Reflecting on her role, Shruti shared, "From the moment I read the script, I knew this film was meant for me. I've always been drawn to stories that explore love, darkness, and self-discovery—concepts that resonate

deeply with me." She added that working with an all-female creative team made the experience even more special, calling it "an alignment of the universe."

The film follows Diana (played by Haasan), who embarks on an emotional journey to scatter her late husband's ashes on a remote Greek island. What starts as a moment of closure soon entangles her in a supernatural ritual. *The Eye* also features Mark Rowley, Anna Savva, and Linda Marlowe in key roles, with Emily Carlton as the scriptwriter.

Salman Khan and Rashmika Mandanna Set the Dance Floor on Fire in 'Zohra Jabeen' Teaser



Salman Khan and Rashmika Mandanna, sharing screen space for the first time in *Sikandar*, have set fans buzzing with the teaser of their upcoming song *Zohra Jabeen*. The upbeat track, released as part of the film's music promotion, is a high-energy dance number that promises to be a perfect Eid treat for fans.

The teaser showcases the sizzling chemistry between Salman and Rashmika, with the duo lighting up every frame. *Zohra Jabeen* is composed by Pritam, directed by A.R. Murugadoss, and choreographed by Farah Khan, elevating the energy of the track. Sung by Nakash Aziz and Dev Negi, with lyrics by Sameer and Danish Sabri, the song is already being touted as a potential chartbuster.

Rashmika, who was last seen in *Chhaava*, also starred in the blockbuster *Pushpa 2: The Rule* with Allu Arjun, while Salman Khan was recently seen in a cameo in *Baby John*.

Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor Set to Film at Iconic Delhi Locations for RC 16

Ram Charan and Janhvi Kapoor will soon be seen sharing screen space for the first time in *RC 16*, a Telugu film directed by Buchi Babu Sana. The duo is nearing the end of their Mysore schedule, after which they will head to Delhi to shoot pivotal scenes at iconic locations like the Parliament and Jama Masjid. According to reports, the scenes featuring Ram Charan are crucial to the sports-centric drama, with the team awaiting approval from the authorities to shoot

at these heritage sites. The film, produced by Mythri Movie Makers, is expected to have an emotional narrative centered on themes of resilience and determination.

Ram Charan, who previously worked with Buchi Babu Sana in the hit film *Uppena*, was last seen in *Game Changer* alongside Kiara Advani. Janhvi Kapoor was recently seen in *Ulajh*, released in August 2024.

The film also stars Shiva Rajkumar and Divyendu, with music by AR Rahman.



Huma Qureshi Returns Stronger in Maharani Season 4 Teaser



Huma Qureshi is back as Rani Bharati in the highly anticipated *Maharani* Season 4, which

promises to showcase a more fierce and fearless version of her character. The teaser, released

today, hints at a significant transformation in Rani's journey as she fiercely protects Bihar amidst looming political threats. In the new season, Huma's character faces harsh accusations, including being called a murderer and an illiterate, while also being dubbed the future Prime Minister. However, her family — Bihar — takes priority over any political aspirations. In a powerful moment, she declares, "Aur Bihar hi humara pariwar hai. Aur agar koi Bihar ko nuksaan pauchega, toh satta hila denge" (And Bihar is my true family. And if anyone dares to harm my family, I will shake the very foundation of the rule).

Season 4 sees Rani Bharati standing tall, ready to confront all challenges and continue her reign as a powerful leader. Fans are eager to see the fate of supporting characters and the twists in the gripping socio-political drama.

Huma Qureshi was last seen in the Zee5 thriller *Mithya - The Dark Chapter*. Besides *Maharani* Season 4, she has *Jolly LLB 3* and *Toxic* to look forward to.