

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

H 33° C
L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

H 35° C
L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

H 36° C
L 26° C



CM Siddaramaiah Slams BJP at CWC Meeting, Calls for Restoring Dignity, Justice, and Federalism

TPN Correspondent | Ahmedabad

CM says Congress governance in Karnataka is rooted in compassion and people-first policies

Accuses BJP of misusing institutions, attacking Constitution, and silencing media voices

Stresses importance of diversity, federalism, and fearless journalism in preserving democracy

In a fiery address at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting in Ahmedabad, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah launched a sharp attack on the BJP-led central government, accusing it of systematically dismantling the foundational values of the Indian Republic. Highlighting Karnataka's governance model, Siddaramaiah said the state is "showing India a different path one rooted in compassion and justice." He cited the implementation of the Congress party's five Guarantees and extensive investment in education as proof of how real governance can "transform lives." Warning of a deeper crisis, Siddaramaiah said the soul of the Republic is under threat. "Justice is being replaced with fear, and opportunity with propaganda," he said. "From the Enforcement Directorate to Governors, every tool of democracy is being turned into a weapon." The Chief Minister emphasized that the Congress is not in politics for

power, but to "restore dignity and hope for every Indian." He alleged that the BJP is enforcing a monolithic vision of India, "pushing one language, one culture, one party," thereby undermining the country's federal structure. He also raised concerns about press freedom, saying, "A free media is essential to a free nation, but on wednesday, truth is being throttled. Journalists are harassed, channels silenced." Touching upon technology and its misuse, Siddaramaiah said that social media, instead of fostering unity, is being exploited to divide the country. "Facts are twisted, and young minds are poisoned by propaganda. We must build bridges, not walls," he asserted. Calling for the preservation of India's diversity and democratic values, Siddaramaiah reaffirmed Congress's stand for inclusive governance, justice, and fearless dialogue, concluding that the party will continue to resist all attempts to weaken the constitutional fabric of the nation.

Guarantee Schemes Are a Bridge Between Struggle and Success, Says Dy CM DKS

Deputy CM highlights how Congress schemes are transforming lives

Emphasizes education success made possible through guarantees

Congress projects welfare model as core to inclusive governance



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Karnataka State Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday underscored the transformative impact of the Congress government's guarantee schemes, asserting they are not merely welfare measures but powerful instruments of opportunity and social upliftment. "Guarantees are not just schemes, they are opportunities that shape the future of the poor," Shivakumar posted on social media. He cited a symbolic example of a mother's hardship and a daughter's hard work—both supported by the state's guarantees—leading to educational success. "The mother's hardship, the daughter's hard work, the guarantee helped! Education won," he wrote. His remarks come as the government intensifies its campaign around the success of its flagship welfare programs ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. The guarantees, which

include schemes like Shakti (free travel for women), Gruha Lakshmi (monthly assistance to women heads of households), and Yuva Nidhi (unemployment allowance for youth), are being accessed by lakhs across Karnataka, particularly in rural and economically weaker segments. Shivakumar, who is also in charge of Bengaluru development, has consistently promoted the guarantee model as a cornerstone of inclusive growth. Officials note that the schemes have led to visible improvements in women's mobility, youth empowerment, and household stability. While the opposition BJP has raised concerns over the long-term financial implications of these initiatives, Congress leaders argue that the guarantees reflect the party's core values of equity and social justice. On Wednesday, Shivakumar

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Suspended BJP MLAs Seek Reversal, Urge Speaker U T Khader to Uphold Assembly Norms

18 BJP MLAs urge Speaker Khader to revoke six-month suspension, cite SC ruling on Maharashtra case

BJP legislators term suspension "unlawful", request Speaker to resolve issue within the Assembly

Cite Supreme Court verdict calling similar Maharashtra suspensions "irrational and illogical"

MLAs claim they chose dialogue over legal remedy, citing democratic protest rights



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

In a fresh twist to the ongoing political standoff in Karnataka, the 18 suspended BJP MLAs on Wednesday urged Assembly Speaker U T Khader to withdraw their six-month suspension, terming it "unlawful" and "beyond the scope" of Rule 348 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure. The legislators pointed to a comparable case in the Maharashtra Assembly, where 12 MLAs were suspended for a year a decision the Supreme Court struck down as "irrational and illogical." Former Deputy Chief Minister and Malleshwaram MLA Dr C N Ashwath Narayan, speaking on behalf of the group, said Karnataka's Rule

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Karnataka Govt to Introduce New Law Regulating Online Betting and Gambling

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Karnataka government is set to bring in a new law to regulate online betting and gambling, Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara announced on Wednesday. Speaking to reporters in Mandya, he said a committee has been constituted to prepare a draft bill, which is expected to be submitted within a month. "I chaired a meeting regarding online betting and gambling yesterday along with the IT Minister. Representatives from the industry were called. There is nothing to regulate them so far," Parameshwara said. "They have agreed to the introduction of a licence system and regulation as per law." The committee comprises senior govern-



ment officials and representatives from the online gaming and betting industry. According to Parameshwara, the initiative is aimed at bringing accountability and legal clarity to a rapidly expanding sector that has remained largely unregulated in the state. The move follows earlier statements by Minister for IT and

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US Bill Threatens to End Work Visa for Indian Students

Creating Uncertainty for 300,000

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Karnataka Ranks No.1 in Corruption, Says CM’s Economic Advisor Basavaraj Rayareddy

- Rayareddy says rampant corruption hurting development in Kalyana Karnataka
- Points to poor construction quality, calls corruption a threat to democracy
- His comments stir debate, seen as a major embarrassment for Congress



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

In a startling revelation, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah’s economic advisor and Yelaburga MLA Basavaraj Rayareddy stated that Karnataka ranks number one in corruption, sending shockwaves across the state. Speaking at a district-level interaction organized by the Regional Imbalance Redressal Committee in Koppal on Wednesday, Rayareddy declared that widespread corruption continues to hinder developmental progress. “Corruption is rampant across administrations, irrespective of the ruling party,” Rayareddy said, adding that Kalyana Karnataka suffers the most due to this. Citing the example of government buildings becoming dilapidated within a decade, he pointed to corruption in construction and governance. “Earlier, buildings lasted for decades. Now they don’t even last ten years. This is because of corruption,” he remarked. He went on to express deep concern over the erosion of democratic values, saying, “A common man or a social activist cannot contest elec-

tions now. Politics is increasingly intertwined with caste, religion, and money power. This is dangerous for democracy.” During the session, Rayareddy instructed the Committee’s member secretary to officially record his statement, affirming his stance regardless of political consequences. “The Chief Minister may say anything, but my opinion remains unchanged,” he said firmly. His candid statement has not only sparked political debate but also posed a major embarrassment for the Congress-led government. While many attendees at the event agreed with Rayareddy, calling it an “open secret”, others were surprised by the timing and bluntness of his comments. Rayareddy’s remarks come amid growing scrutiny over governance and corruption in Karnataka and are likely to fuel the opposition’s narrative in the coming days.

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Suspended BJP MLAs Seek Reversal, Urge Speaker U T Khader to Uphold Assembly Norms

Maharashtra’s Rule - 53 permits suspension only up to the end of the ongoing session. In an unprecedented move on March 21, Speaker Khader had suspended 18 BJP MLAs for “indiscipline” after they disrupted the budget session by staging a protest in the well of the House, surrounding the Speaker’s podium and hurling papers. Marshals had to forcibly remove them. “Despite the option of legal recourse, we have chosen to address this matter within the Assembly itself,” Narayan said, adding that Rule 363 empowers the Speaker to reconsider and revoke the suspension. “We are not here to defame the Chair but

to uphold democratic norms,” he stressed. Narayan also highlighted that many of the suspended MLAs are first-timers and argued the punishment was disproportionate. He further alleged that a Minister had assaulted a BJP MLA in the House using a headphone and a book, yet no action was taken. “This double standard must end,” he said. The suspended MLAs include BJP chief whip Doddanagouda Patil and several senior leaders. A formal memorandum will be submitted to the Speaker requesting withdrawal of the suspension in the interest of fair legislative conduct.

Guarantee Schemes Are a Bridge Between Struggle and Success, Says Dy CM DKS

also attended the AICC session in Ahmedabad, Gujarat—calling it a land that holds the enduring legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel. Alongside senior

Congress leaders, he reaffirmed his commitment to strengthening the organisation and serving the people with renewed purpose.

Karnataka Govt to Introduce New Law Regulating Online Betting and Gambling

BT Priyank Kharge, who in March indicated that the state government was examining ways to bring real money gaming and online platforms under a clear legal framework. Officials said the new law would address concerns related to consumer protection, financial transparency, and responsible gaming practices. The proposed legislation comes amid growing concerns over the rise in online betting among youth and the potential social

impact of unchecked gambling. In the absence of clear laws, enforcement agencies have found it difficult to act against violators, while several states have already moved to introduce strict regulations or outright bans. The upcoming bill is expected to propose a licensing mechanism, compliance requirements, and penalties for violations. Once the draft is finalized, the government plans to introduce it in the Assembly for approval.

BBMP Revives Skydeck Plan at Jnanabharathi Campus, Faces Strong Opposition

- BBMP finalizes 250-m tall skydeck site near Metro station in BU’s Jnanabharathi campus
- Faculty, students, and environmentalists raise alarm over ecological, academic impact
- Land falls in buffer zone, part of eco-sensitive biopark created in 2002



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

After months of deliberation, the BBMP has finalized Bangalore University’s Jnanabharathi campus as the site for the ambitious 250-metre skydeck project, aimed at boosting tourism along the Bengaluru-Mysuru corridor. However, the decision has reignited fierce opposition from students, faculty, and environmentalists who fear damage to the academic environment and ecological integrity of the area. The Jnanabharathi campus site was initially proposed in August 2024 but dropped over concerns that student activities and biodiversity would be affected. Despite this, BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath has

written to the Higher Education Department seeking 15 acres of land for the project near the Metro station, offering options like a BOT model or revenue-sharing mechanism. While BBMP has earmarked Rs 400 crore in its latest budget — with Rs 50 crore allocated for preparatory work — Bangalore University has not formally agreed to part with the land. BU Vice-Chancellor Dr Jayakara Shetty stated that no written proposal has yet been received, but any such request will be placed before the Syndicate for discussion. Senior BU faculty members maintain the land lies within the Vrishabhavathi Valley and a Rajakaluve buffer

zone, where construction is restricted under NGT guidelines. The area in question also houses a rich biopark created by environmentalist AN Yellappa Reddy, with over 175 species of birds and a variety of trees, recharge wells, and kalyanis. Experts have warned the skydeck could become another ecological disaster like Telangana’s Kancha Gachibowli. Other proposed locations earlier considered for the project included NGEF, KSDDL, Hemmigeppura, and Kom-maghatta — all of which were eventually dropped. Environmentalists now urge BBMP to reconsider and protect what remains of West Bengaluru’s vital green lung.

Home Minister G Parameshwara Hoists Flag at NSUI Foundation Day in Mandya

TPN Correspondent | Mandya

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara participated in the NSUI Foundation Day celebrations at the Mandya District Congress Office on Wednesday as part of his official tour of the district. Marking the occasion, he hoisted the Congress party flag and addressed the gathering of party workers and citizens. Parameshwara took the opportunity to underline the importance of empowering youth and student organizations like NSUI in shaping the state’s political and social discourse. He praised the dedication of party cadres at the grassroots level and called for strengthening the Congress base across Karnataka through active public engagement. During the event, several people submitted petitions to the Minister concerning local issues, civic amenities, and development demands. Parameshwara personally received these petitions and assured that ap-



propriate action would be taken in consultation with district officials and concerned departments. The event was attended by Mandya MLA Ravi Ganiga, District Congress President C.D. Gangadhar, Working President P. Chidambaram, and KPCC Secretary Padmanabha, who joined Parameshwara in interacting with the public and addressing party workers. Later, Parameshwara held informal discussions with Congress leaders

from the district, where strategies were discussed for upcoming organizational programs and strengthening the party structure at the booth level. The Minister’s visit is seen as part of the Congress party’s ongoing outreach efforts to connect with the public ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. Party leaders emphasized unity, service, and responsiveness to public needs as key priorities going forward.

MP Brijesh Chowta Lays Foundation for ₹6 Crore Road Projects Under CRIF in Dakshina Kannada



TPN Correspondent | Dakshina Kannada

Dakshina Kannada MP Captain Brijesh Chowta laid the foundation stone for the development of two crucial roads under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF), with an estimated investment of Rs 6 crore. The upgrades are expected to ease travel and improve connectivity across the district, especially in border areas shared with Kerala. As part of the initiative, the Subrahmanya–Manjeshwar road, which runs through Parlada in Puttur taluk, will be upgraded at a cost of approximately Rs 3.12 crore. A total stretch of 5.20 km will be developed, linking National Highway 275 with State Highway 100. The groundbreaking ceremony was held at Machimale. In addition, the Nintikallu–Bellare–Nettaru and Anchinadka–Kavu–Ishwaramangala–Pallatturu roads will be developed at a combined cost of around Rs 2.88 crore. The foundation stone for this 4.80-km stretch was laid at Anchinadka. MP Brijesh Chowta stated that once completed, these projects will provide seamless transportation for local residents and boost rural infrastructure, particularly benefitting travelers between the border regions of Karnataka and Kerala. The programme was also attended by MLA Ashok Kumar Rai, former MLA Sanjeeva Matandoor, and several local leaders and officials. The development is part of the MP’s continued focus on strengthening infrastructure in the region using central funds, ensuring better connectivity and economic upliftment for remote areas of Dakshina Kannada.

Shakti Scheme Strains Karnataka’s Bus Network; Cabinet to Decide on 4,000 New Buses



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

While the Shakti scheme has enabled over 25 lakh women daily to travel for free across Karnataka, it has also placed an enormous burden on the state’s ageing fleet of buses. With over 900 crore additional passengers annually, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) and its sister corporations are struggling to maintain operations. Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy recently highlighted the urgent need for new buses. Of the 26,000 buses currently in service, 10 per cent need replacement each year. However, no new buses were inducted during the previous BJP government’s three-year-ten-month tenure, resulting in the fleet dropping to around 21,000 buses. To bridge the gap, the government initially considered renting buses but has now opted to procure 4,000 new

ones, with a projected cost of Rs 2,000 crore. Each bus will cost approximately Rs 50 lakh. The proposal is expected to be placed before the cabinet on Friday when Congress leaders return from Ahmedabad. The strain is particularly severe in regions like Belagavi and Kalyana Karnataka, where NWKRTC and KKRTC dominate public transport with little to no private alternatives. These regions are slated to receive 700 buses each, while 600 buses will be allotted to southern districts. The southern belt is comparatively better off due to support from private and interstate operators from neighbouring states. Incidents of bus breakdowns, overcrowding, and maintenance delays have been reported across North Karnataka, making the Friday cabinet meeting pivotal in bolstering public transport and ensuring the continued success of the Shakti scheme.

I Have Not Resigned, Nor Am I Contesting for National President Post: Annamalai

TPN Correspondent | Udupi

Tamil Nadu BJP president K Annamalai dismissed rumours of his resignation and clarified that he is not in the race for the BJP national president post. Speaking to media representatives in Udupi, he stated that he continues as the state president and that there is no formal notification yet on the national-level election. Annamalai emphasized that the state unit presidential election can be held at any time, but confirmed that he will not be a contender for the top national role. His comments came amid speculation about leadership changes within the BJP at both state and national levels. He further revealed that the BJP high command has expressed interest in forming an alliance with a regional party for the upcoming Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. However, he refrained



from naming any particular party.

The BJP leader reiterated his commitment to the party's goals in Tamil Nadu, adding that his current focus remains on strengthening the organization and preparing for the next electoral battle.

Annamalai's clarification comes as the BJP is strategizing its southern outreach, especially in Tamil Nadu, where it aims to expand its footprint through regional tie-ups. His remarks are expected to put to rest internal speculations and stabilize the state unit's leadership narrative ahead of key political developments.

BJP Vijayendra Slams CM Siddaramaiah Over Price Hikes and Unfulfilled Promises

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Karnataka BJP president BY Vijayendra launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, accusing him of burdening the public with steep price hikes and breaking electoral promises. Speaking to reporters in Mysuru and addressing the Janakrosha rally in Hassan, Vijayendra claimed that the Congress government has raised prices of 49 essential goods, including milk, petrol, diesel, property taxes, and water bills.

Mocking the CM, Vijayendra remarked, "It seems Siddaramaiah has appointed an expert committee solely to hike prices." He compared this with the Union Government's Rs 2 per litre hike in fuel prices, clarifying that the burden would be borne by oil companies, not the

public. On the LPG price hike, he defended the central government's policy, stating that the domestic gas cylinder priced at Rs 1,107 in March 2023 is now available at Rs 850, and blamed global crude oil prices for the adjustment. He warned that had Rahul Gandhi become the Prime Minister, the price of an LPG cylinder could have crossed Rs 2,000.

Vijayendra accused the Congress of failing to pay salaries to teachers and police officials, and said that development grants have not reached MLAs' constituencies, even drawing criticism from Congress legislators themselves.

In Hassan, Vijayendra intensified his attack, claiming that the Congress regime is diverting SC/ST and Backward Classes welfare funds, and alleged religious dis-

- Congress government increased prices of 49 essential items including milk and fuel
- BJP leader blames Siddaramaiah for mismanagement and fiscal burden on the public
- Accuses Congress of turning Karnataka government into an ATM for the party high command



crimination in the release of government grants. He called the state guaranteeing "a façade" for misusing taxpayer money and

asserted that the Congress has turned the Karnataka government into an ATM for its high command.

He reaffirmed that the

BJP will play the role of a constructive opposition and ruled out any Operation Kamala-like efforts to topple the government.

FIR Filed Against Yatnal After Controversial Remarks Stir Tensions

- Expelled BJP leader Basanagouda Patil Yatnal faces legal heat for inflammatory statement
- FIR registered following his remarks: "Hindus are born to be respected..."
- Yatnal under fire from both Congress and BJP for repeated provocative speeches

TPN Correspondent | Vijayapura

Controversial former BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, often referred to as the 'Hindu Tiger', has once again landed in legal trouble after his recent provocative remarks went viral, prompting the registration of a police FIR. The incident marks the first official case registered against Yatnal after his expulsion from the BJP for speaking out against party state president B.Y. Vijayendra. Yatnal, known for his fiery speeches, made the remark: "Hin-

dus are born to be respected...", which opposition leaders have slammed as incendiary and divisive. Congress leaders accused him of "setting fire to the ground" and disturbing the communal harmony of the state. Already facing multiple legal complaints from previous speeches, Yatnal's statements continue to draw sharp criticism. Just days ago, he was embroiled in controversy over his comments on "bulldozer justice," which opposition parties condemned as inflammatory. Yat-



nal had also accused his own party of harboring anti-Hindu elements, and openly criticized B.S. Yediyurappa and his son Vijayendra, leading to his expulsion from the BJP. His continuous attacks on the party leadership and defiant tone have increasingly alienated him, even among his supporters.

Legal experts say this recent FIR may be just the beginning of a string of

cases against the former Vijayapura MLA. With dozens of older complaints still pending, Yatnal could face further legal scrutiny in the coming weeks. Despite mounting criticism and isolation from the BJP, Yatnal remains unapologetic, maintaining his stance as a staunch Hindutva voice, though his methods are now under the scanner of law enforcement agencies.

Mrityunjaya Swamiji Embarrassing BJP by Supporting Yatnal - Vijugouda Patil



TPN Correspondent | Bagalkot

Former BJP MLA Vijugouda Patil on Wednesday voiced strong criticism against Kudalasangama Peethadhipati Basava Jaya Mrityunjaya Swamiji, accusing him of embarrassing the BJP by publicly supporting expelled leader Basanagouda Patil Yatnal. Addressing a press conference in the city, Patil was joined by several promi-

nent members of the Panchamasali Lingayat community.

"We respect Swamiji's dedication and fully support his struggle for 2A reservation for Panchamasalis," Patil said. "But giving an ultimatum to the BJP to reinstate Yatnal, and threatening to launch a fierce protest if the demand isn't met, is unwarranted and inappropriate," he added.

Patil pointed out that Swamiji's intervention in internal party decisions is not in the interest of the community or the party. "By aligning with a controversial figure who has been expelled from the BJP, Swamiji is causing unnecessary strain within the party," he said.

The rift between the BJP and Swamiji has widened following the latter's public warning that the party

must recall Yatnal or face a community-led agitation. Yatnal, who was recently expelled for repeated acts of indiscipline and anti-party statements, continues to receive open backing from Mrityunjaya Swamiji, sparking discontent among several senior Lingayat leaders in North Karnataka.

Patil reiterated that while the community stands united in its demand for social justice through reservation, it does not endorse political coercion. "Swamiji's role should be spiritual and social—not political. Mixing religious authority with party politics is creating confusion and damaging both causes," he concluded.

The episode marks a growing divide within the Panchamasali Lingayat leadership, with tensions rising as the election season intensifies.

No Merger with BJP, Only Alliance: JDS Youth Leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy Clarifies

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

JDS youth leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy strongly dismissed any talk of a merger between the Janata Dal (Secular) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), asserting that the relationship is strictly limited to an alliance. Addressing reporters at the JDS state office in Bengaluru, Nikhil expressed displeasure at a journalist's use of the term "merger" in reference to JDS's current political alignment with the BJP.

"The party founded by HD Devegowda remains strong across Karnataka," said Nikhil. He claimed that the JDS continues to hold a statewide vote share of 18 to 20 percent, with a particularly high 34 percent in Old Mysore. He also rejected the narrative that JDS is weak in Kirtur and North Karnataka,

stating that the party has a growing footprint in these regions as well.

Nikhil Kumaraswamy emphasized that while JDS and BJP are contesting elections together, there is no question of a merger. "We have entered into an alliance for the purpose of the elections, but JDS remains an independent party with its own ideology and base," he said.

This clarification comes amid ongoing speculation in political circles and media discussions about the future of the JDS in the post-election scenario, particularly following its Lok Sabha alliance with the BJP. The JDS leader said that misleading interpretations only serve



to confuse the public and distort the party's position.

As the Lok Sabha elections draw closer, JDS is focused on consolidating its voter base, especially in regions where it has historically performed well. Nikhil reiterated that the Devegowda legacy remains intact, and the party will continue to work independently while cooperating with BJP on mutually agreed terms.

AAI Inspects Sites for 2nd Airport

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A team from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) conducted inspections on Tuesday at two potential sites for Bengaluru's proposed second international airport, both located along Kanakapura Road in the city's southern region. These locations, consisting largely of agricultural and barren land, are situated adjacent to each other and lie beyond the NICE Road corridor, near National Highway

148. The villages under assessment included K Chudahalli, Karenahalli, Veerasandra, and Sadanapalya, where the AAI team carried out a pre-feasibility study to evaluate the viability of establishing a new airport. As part of their field survey, the officials climbed two hilly terrains—one by foot and the other by vehicle—to get a comprehensive understanding of the area's topography. The inspection team was headed by Vikram Singh, General

Manager (Operations) of AAI, and was accompanied by Ramanagara Deputy Commissioner Yeshwanth V Gururkar and Special Deputy Commissioner of Karnataka Industries Area Development Board (KIADB) Dayanand Bhandari. The officials inquired about the proximity of the sites to water and gas pipelines, as well as the presence of any air-polluting industries nearby, which could impact airport operations and safety. The third proposed site, located along



the Nelamangala-Kunigal Road, is scheduled for inspection on Wednesday. The survey is part of a broader effort by the Karnataka government and



national Airport nearing saturation. The Kanakapura Road and Nelamangala sites were previously shortlisted by the state government based on their geographical and infrastructural potential. This multi-location assessment is a critical step in identifying a feasible

site for long-term aviation infrastructure expansion, taking into account land availability, connectivity, and environmental factors. Once the feasibility reports are compiled and analyzed, the state is expected to move forward with further planning and approvals.

Bengaluru Vehicle Count Hits 1.23 Cr

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru continues to witness a relentless surge in vehicle numbers, adding a staggering 7.22 lakh new registrations in the financial year 2024-25, pushing the city's total vehicle count to a record 1.23 crore. According to the latest data from the Transport Department, this includes 4.68 lakh two-wheelers and 1.45 lakh cars, underlining the growing dependence on personal mobility in a city already grappling with severe traffic congestion.



On average, more than 60,000 vehicles were added every month, translating to nearly 2,000 new vehicles hitting the roads daily. This sharp rise further cements Bengaluru's position as the city with

the highest number of vehicle registrations in Karnataka—over 50% of all new cars in the state were registered here alone. A month-wise breakdown shows October topping the charts with 76,509 new registrations, largely

driven by festive-season sales, while December recorded the lowest at 42,520. The trend highlights a continuing pattern of exponential growth in vehicular population, with previous years recording 1.16 crore vehicles in 2023-

24, 1.09 crore in 2022-23, 1.04 crore in 2021-22, and 1 crore in 2020-21. The steep increase has placed enormous strain on the city's already overwhelmed road infrastructure, especially as Bengaluru lacks a fully integrated and re-

liable public transport system. Urban planners and mobility experts have raised concerns that the unchecked growth in vehicle numbers is unsustainable and will worsen air pollution, travel times, and overall urban quality of life.

Despite ongoing efforts to expand metro connectivity and promote public transit, the current pace of infrastructure development appears insufficient to counterbalance the massive rise in private vehicle use. The data paints a stark picture of a city bursting at the seams, where mobility is increasingly defined by congestion, longer commute times, and a pressing need for policy interventions that prioritize sustainable transportation options.



Majority of 112 Calls Not Emergencies

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In 2024, Bengaluru's police emergency helpline 112 received a massive 26.92 lakh calls, but startlingly, only 16.46% of them—around 4.43 lakh—were classified as genuine emergencies requiring an immediate police response.

These genuine calls, categorized as Calls for Service (CFS), led to the deployment of Hoysala patrol vehicles and formed the critical frontline of real-time law enforcement in the city. The data, sourced from the Bengaluru Police Command Centre, showed that nearly 80% of the legitimate emergency calls were related to law and order issues, such as thefts, assaults, or disturbances, while the remaining 20% were linked to traffic-related incidents like accidents or road obstructions.

However, the overwhelming majority of calls made to 112 were not emergencies. Among these, around 2.06 lakh calls—roughly 7.65%—were identified as 'wrong calls', which include misdials, prank calls, blank calls, or calls made with irrelevant or frivolous intent. This misuse of the emergency helpline has raised serious concerns among police officials, as it clogs up the system, wastes valuable time

and resources, and could potentially delay help for those facing real, urgent situations. The authorities have repeatedly emphasized that emergency services are not to be used lightly, and such patterns of non-essential usage highlight the need for widespread public awareness on responsible helpline usage. In addition to wrong calls, a significant portion of the remaining call traffic involved information requests, non-emergency grievances, and in some cases, mere curiosity or mistaken dials. With Bengaluru's population and urban sprawl rapidly growing, the strain on emergency response systems has become increasingly apparent, underscoring the necessity for better digital literacy, stricter call screening protocols, and possibly even penalties for repeated misuse. Police officials are considering launching educational campaigns and deploying technological solutions to filter out nuisance calls more efficiently. Ensuring that helplines like 112 are accessible and responsive for true emergencies is crucial for the safety and well-being of the city's residents, and restoring the integrity of the system is becoming a top priority for Bengaluru's law enforcement authorities.

Family Trapped in Bengaluru Airport Lift

TPN, Correspondent | Bengaluru

A family's visit to Kempegowda International Airport's Terminal 2 turned into a distressing experience when they got trapped in a malfunctioning lift that jerked continuously for nearly 15 minutes. Bengaluru resident Macqueline Fernandez shared the incident on social media platform X (formerly Twitter), describing how she, along with her parents and two senior citizens, was stuck inside the lift while they were at the airport to see off her sister, who was scheduled to board an international flight.



Fernandez described the ordeal as a "jolt bolting experience" and questioned the safety standards in place at one of India's premier airports. According to her account, the situation was made

worse by the complete lack of proper emergency measures. There was no emergency phone inside the lift, leaving the family with no direct line for help. Additionally, the emergency contact numbers displayed inside the lift proved useless — repeated attempts to reach the

'Duty Manager' went unanswered. After multiple failed calls, Fernandez was finally able to connect with the Terminal Manager, who, to her dismay, reportedly took a casual approach to the matter, showing little urgency or concern for the family's safety. Her post quickly gained traction

online, drawing public attention to the incident and sparking a conversation about the importance of functional safety infrastructure in critical public spaces like airports.

The fact that such a serious lapse occurred in a modern facility like Terminal 2 has raised alarms, especially given the pres-

ence of elderly individuals in the lift and the potential for panic or health emergencies during such an event.

Many users online expressed concern and demanded accountability from the airport authorities, calling for immediate inspections and upgrades to ensure that all elevators are equipped with emergency communication systems and that staff respond swiftly and appropriately to such situations.

With Bengaluru Airport positioning itself as a world-class travel hub, such lapses in safety and emergency response are not only alarming but also damaging to its reputation.

The incident has highlighted the urgent need for stringent safety audits and real-time readiness in handling unforeseen technical failures.

KRRS to Launch Direct Farmer Santhe

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a significant move aimed at empowering farmers and bypassing middlemen, the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS - Collective Leadership) is set to launch regular santhes (farmers' markets) in Bengaluru, providing a platform for farmers to sell their produce directly to consumers. This initiative seeks to address the challenges farmers face in an un-

equal agricultural market and ensure they receive fair value for their crops. The first of these santhes will be held from April 12 to 14 at the Munivenkatayya Memorial Open Air Theatre in Rajarajeshwarinagar. It will serve as an experimental launch, where consumers in the city can buy fresh produce directly from farmers, eliminating the need for traders or middlemen. KRRS has invited farmers from all over

Karnataka to participate, provided they register in advance with the organization. To streamline the event and ensure quality participation, priority will be given to the first 100 registered farmers. This effort not only aims to bring consumers closer to the source of their food but also helps farmers get better prices by avoiding traditional market commissions.

The KRRS sees this as a step toward creating a

more balanced and farmer-friendly marketing ecosystem and hopes that if successful, such santhes can be expanded across the city at regular intervals.

With the growing interest in organic and farm-fresh produce among urban residents, the initiative is expected to gain momentum. The KRRS has been at the forefront of advocating for farmers' rights and sustainable agricultural practices, and

this direct-sale model reinforces their ongoing commitment to grassroots agricultural reform. Organisers also hope that these santhes will build stronger ties between rural producers and urban consumers, fostering mutual respect and economic fairness in the food supply chain.

As Bengaluru readies itself for this unique three-day farmers' market, all eyes are on how effectively this pilot run will



bridge the urban-rural gap and reshape the way agri-

cultural produce reaches people's plates.

Kerala Lawyers Protest Court Fee Hike

TPN Correspondent | Kerala

Lawyers across Kerala staged a state-wide boycott of court proceedings on April 9, 2025, demanding the rollback of the recent steep hike in court fees by the state government.

The protest, which saw active participation from advocates in various districts, was marked by demonstrations outside court complexes and government offices, including a notable gathering in front of the Sub Treasury in Ernakulam by members of the Ernakulam District Court. The legal

fraternity voiced strong opposition, arguing that the increased fees have significantly burdened litigants, making the pursuit of justice unaffordable for many. Advocates highlighted that this financial barrier disproportionately affects the economically weaker sections of society, who are now discouraged from seeking legal remedies due to the inflated costs involved in filing cases.

The protesting lawyers emphasized that access to justice is a constitutional right and any move that curtails it is unacceptable. They urged the state gov-

ernment to immediately reconsider its decision, warning that continued inaction could lead to escalated forms of protest, including prolonged boycotts and statewide mobilizations.

Many legal professionals believe that the fee hike contradicts the very principle of affordable justice that the judiciary upholds. They also criticized the government for introducing such a major change without prior consultation with stakeholders in the legal system. The protest has disrupted proceedings in lower courts and district courts

throughout the state, with many cases being adjourned due to lack of representation. Several bar associations have extended their full support to the agitation, and discussions are underway to chart out the next steps if the government fails to respond. With mounting pressure from the legal community and growing public concern, the state government is expected to issue a response soon. Meanwhile, the lawyers remain firm in their stance, reiterating that justice should never come with a price tag that excludes the common citizen.



Terrorist Encounter Escalates in Udhampur

TPN Correspondent | Jammu and Kashmir

A fierce encounter erupted in the Jopher village of Udhampur district, Jammu and Kashmir, on Wednesday as security forces established contact with suspected terrorists during a joint combining operation. Acting on intelligence inputs, personnel from the Jammu and Kashmir Police and other security agencies launched a search in the Ramnagar police station jurisdiction when they encountered the militants, triggering a gun battle.

Police confirmed via a post on social media platform X that two to three terrorists are believed to be trapped in the area,

and firing is still ongoing. The encounter is part of a larger, ongoing anti-terror operation that began on March 24, in response to growing terrorist activity in the region. Over the past 17 days, security agencies have been tracking the movement of militants across several districts, leading to multiple encounters.

One such major gunfight occurred on March 27 in the Sanyial area of Kathua district, where two terrorists and four policemen were killed. The operation has intensified since then, with forces on high alert and deploying advanced surveillance and tracking mechanisms. In Jopher, the entire area



has been cordoned off to prevent any escape routes for the trapped terrorists. Local residents have been warned to stay indoors, and entry into the conflict zone has been restricted.

Drones, sniffer dogs, and thermal imaging de-

vices have been deployed to trace hidden militants, while reinforcements have been moved in to maintain pressure. Officials stressed that safety of civilians remains a top priority and that every precaution is being taken

during the high-stakes operation.

The frequent movement of terrorists and their attempts to evade capture by shifting locations have raised concern among security agencies, prompting a more aggressive pursuit. The encounter underlines the persistent threats faced in the region despite heightened security measures.

Authorities are closely monitoring the situation, and further details are expected once the operation concludes. This latest episode serves as a stark reminder of the volatile security landscape in Jammu and Kashmir and the need for continuous vigilance.

Youth Congress Protests LPG Price Hike



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Youth Congress in Karnataka launched statewide protests on Wednesday against the recent Rs 50 hike in LPG cylinder prices, targeting the BJP-led government at the Centre. Demonstrations erupted in districts such as Kalaburagi, Hubballi, Dharwad, Yadgir, and Kodagu, where protesters carried empty gas cylinders, placards, and banners while raising slogans denouncing the alleged anti-people policies of the Union government. In Kalaburagi, protestors dramatically cooked food on traditional stoves fueled by firewood in the middle of the road, aiming to spotlight the burden on poor households unable to afford cooking gas.

The symbolic act was intended to highlight the plight of women hit hardest by the LPG price surge. In Hubballi, Youth Congress members marched from Sangolli Rayanna Circle to the Mini Vidhana Soudha with gas cylinders on their heads, vocally demanding a rollback of the

price hike. They called out the BJP's ongoing 'Janaakrosha Yatre', which targets the Congress government in Karnataka, arguing that the real anger should be directed at the Centre for escalating fuel costs.

The protesters emphasized that the BJP's protests are misplaced and that the Centre must be held accountable for the price rise affecting millions of households. A similar scene unfolded in Dharwad town, where Youth Congress members rallied with equal intensity. The ruling Congress in the state views this agitation as a counter-response to the BJP's campaign and a necessary move to defend citizens struggling under inflation.

Protesters warned that unless the Centre rolls back the LPG price hike, the demonstrations would only grow more intense in the coming days. The protests underline the growing friction between state and central political narratives, as rising fuel prices continue to stir public unrest and political showdowns.

Storm Sparks Fire in Yadgir Village

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

A powerful storm swept through a village in Karnataka's Yadgir district on Monday evening, triggering a fire scare and injuring two people after old power lines snapped due to heavy winds. The storm, accompanied by strong gusts, reportedly caused a short circuit near the Mallikarjuna Temple, where an aging transformer pole gave way, sending live wires crashing down and igniting fires along residential connections.

The sudden electrical surge disrupted several appliances in nearby homes, causing panic among villagers as sparks flew and small flames



erupted from exposed lines. Two residents sustained electric shock injuries during the incident and were immediately taken to a nearby hospital. Fortunately, doctors confirmed that both victims are out of danger.

However, the event has

sparked outrage in the local community, with residents blaming the power company for its failure to upgrade or maintain aging infrastructure. According to locals, the transformer pole that failed had long shown signs of wear, yet no action had

been taken despite multiple complaints.

They have now demanded accountability and urgent improvements to the village's electrical network, citing the near-tragic consequences of negligence. In addition to the injuries, several households reported damaged appliances and intermittent outages following the surge, further compounding frustrations. Eyewitnesses said that the fire, though quickly extinguished, could have spread rapidly had the winds been stronger or help delayed.

Authorities have promised to investigate the cause of the short circuit and assess the condition

of electrical infrastructure across the village. Local leaders and public representatives have visited the site and pledged support for the injured and affected families.

As Karnataka braces for more unpredictable weather patterns during the pre-monsoon season, incidents like these underline the urgent need for rural infrastructure upgrades, especially in power distribution. The Yadgir fire scare has become a wake-up call for authorities and power suppliers to reinforce safety protocols, modernize outdated equipment, and ensure that no other village faces a similar threat from neglected electrical systems.

Saif Ali Khan Attack Charge Sheet Filed

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

Nearly three months after the shocking attack on Bollywood actor Saif Ali Khan at his residence, the Bandra police have officially filed a charge sheet in a Mumbai court. The incident, which occurred in January 2025, involved an intruder who managed to enter the actor's home and assault him, leading to Saif's brief hospitalization at Lilavati Hospital. He was later discharged and seen recovering at his residence. On Wednesday, April 9, officials confirmed

that the charge sheet has been submitted and includes substantial evidence against the accused, identified as Bangladeshi national Mohammad Shariful Islam. Though police have not disclosed the exact details of the evidence, the submission marks a significant step forward in the investigation.

The filing of the charge sheet formalizes the legal proceedings against the accused and could lead to a trial in the coming months. The incident had triggered security

concerns among public figures and fans, highlighting the vulnerabilities even celebrities face in their private spaces. The case had drawn widespread attention in January when news of Saif's hospitalization broke, and speculation around the intruder's motive circulated widely. The actor has since remained largely out of the public eye, while police have continued their probe. The authorities' decision to charge the accused under relevant sections of Indian law underscores the seriousness

of the offense. Meanwhile, the entertainment industry and Saif's fans continue to express solidarity and relief that he recovered without long-term harm. The court proceedings are expected to bring further clarity on how the breach occurred and whether there were lapses in personal or building security. As the legal process moves ahead, all eyes will be on how the case unfolds and what it could mean for improving residential security protocols for high-profile individuals in Mumbai.



WORLD HOMEOPATHY DAY APRIL 10

A Tribute, A Reflection, A Promise

April 10 marks World Homeopathy Day, observed in memory of the great visionary Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of Homeopathy. While it's a tribute to his contribution to the field of medicine, it is also a day for both practitioners and patients to pause and reflect on how this gentle yet powerful system of healing continues to quietly transform lives—especially in today's world where lifestyle disorders and chronic diseases are rampant.

What is Homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a holistic system of medicine based on the principle of "like cures like." It means a substance that causes symptoms in a healthy person can be used in minute doses to treat similar symptoms in a sick person. It focuses not just on the disease, but on the person as a whole—their physical complaints, emotional state, genetic tendencies, lifestyle, and environment. Like Ayurveda, Allopathy, Siddha, and Unani, Homeopathy is a complete medical science in its own right. Every system of medicine has its strengths and limitations. What makes homeopathy distinctive is its individualized approach, its deep philosophy of healing, and its potential to offer complete, lasting cures without suppressing symptoms.

Why Homeopathy?

There's a common saying among practitioners: "A homeopath may fail, but not homeopathy." This isn't just rhetoric—it's a reflection of the system's potential when practiced correctly. Homeopathy doesn't treat diseases; it treats people. Instead of chasing symptoms, it aims to find the root cause and restore balance within the individual. This unique approach ensures that treatment is customized, not generalized. Two people with the same diagnosis might receive entirely different remedies based on their personality, symptoms, lifestyle, and mental state. That's the beauty of homeopathy—it sees the person behind the disease.

What Does a Homeopath Really Do?

When you visit a homeopath, don't expect



Dr. Maruboina Ramakrishna
BHMS. MD. MCAH
(Asian Homeocare, Vijayawada World Homeopathy Day)

a 5-minute consultation. We dive deep. From your childhood history, stress levels, food cravings, fears, emotional state, sleep pattern—everything is considered. This helps the homeopath understand not just the 'what' of your illness but the 'why'. What triggered it? What's sustaining it? What needs to be addressed in you so that the disease leaves?

How Does Homeopathy Differ from Other Systems?

Homeopathy stands apart in several ways:

- **Case-taking:** Consultations are longer and more detailed.
- **Philosophy:** Focus is on treating the individual, not just the illness.
- **Medicine Preparation:** Remedies are derived from natural substances and potentized in a unique way.
- **Dosage and Dispensing:** No bitter pills or painful injections—just sweet, easy-to-take pills.

This method makes homeopathy especially friendly for children, elderly, and even pets. Is Homeopathy Only for Chronic Conditions? Absolutely not. Ho-

meopathy works beautifully for acute conditions too—colds, fevers, diarrhoea, injuries, allergies, and more. In such situations, remedies stimulate the immune system to respond quickly and naturally. So whether your issue is recent or long-standing, homeopathy has something to offer. Can I Take Homeopathy Along with Other Medicines? Yes. Homeopathy can complement conventional treatment. In fact, if you're dealing with a chronic disease—like diabetes, thyroid disorders, arthritis, allergies, or PCOS—and your current medication is only giving partial relief or your reports are not improving despite increasing doses, that's the right time to consider a homeopath. We aim to support recovery, reduce dependency, and in many cases, bring reports back to normal. How Long Should I Wait for Results? Healing takes time, and in homeopathy, patience pays off. Results vary based on how long the condition has been present, your age, lifestyle, and overall vitality. Allergies often require treatment over 4 seasonal cycles. Chronic conditions like asthma, PCOD, psoriasis, or arthritis may take 18–24 months to show significant and lasting improvements. But once cured, the chances of relapse are minimal. Common Myths About Homeopathy—Busted

- **"Homeopathy heats the body." Not true. The remedies balance your system, not overheat it.**
- **"I must stop all other medicines." No. You can continue your existing treatment alongside homeopathy under proper guidance.**
- **"Homeopathy pills are sweet—do they increase sugar levels?" No. The quantity of sugar in the pills is negligible and safe even for diabetics. On this World Homeopathy Day, let's not just remember the founder of this science, but also reflect on the way it has restored health to millions—gently, safely, and naturally. Whether you are a patient looking for lasting relief or a curious mind wondering what homeopathy truly is, take this day as an opportunity to explore, understand, and embrace this remarkable system of healing. Because homeopathy doesn't just treat diseases—it transforms lives.**



Global Boycotts of US Goods

Across the globe, American products are increasingly becoming the target of consumer boycotts as citizens of various countries protest U.S. foreign policy and political actions—particularly those tied to the Trump administration. These boycotts, while not coordinated under a single umbrella movement, reflect a rising wave of politically motivated consumer activism where purchasing decisions are shaped by geopolitical sentiments. From fast-food chains and tech giants to luxury fashion and entertainment exports, US brands are feeling the ripple effects of international frustration. Protesters in cities like London, Paris, Istanbul, and Kuala Lumpur have been vocal, with rallies targeting not just political leaders like Donald Trump but also high-profile figures such as Elon Musk, symbolizing corporate America's global dominance. At the heart of these boycotts lies a growing realization: consumer culture is inextricably linked to politics. Global consumers are not passive participants; they are politically conscious actors capable of reshaping market dynamics in response to perceived injustices. The call to "vote with your wallet" has grown louder, and it's gaining traction. For Trump, this trend could be a cause for concern. While his domestic base may rally behind protectionism and "America First" rhetoric, the global marketplace plays a critical role in the strength of the US economy. Exports, brand reputation, and cultural influence form key pillars of soft power, and sustained boycotts could erode these assets. Additionally, American corporations may find themselves navigating treacherous terrain—balancing domestic political alignment with international market expectations. In this environment, the Trump brand itself becomes a liability in foreign markets, not just in political spheres but in consumer perception too. This could also indirectly affect the U.S. economy, as declining international sales lead to layoffs, market pullbacks, and reduced investor confidence. What's clear is that these boycotts are more than fleeting gestures; they are part of a broader shift in global consumer behavior, where identity, ethics, and politics increasingly dictate how people shop and what they support. For American leadership, and Trump in particular, ignoring this shift could mean losing not just goodwill abroad, but valuable market ground as well.

Time to Retire Iran War Talk

The longstanding hostility between Iran and the United States remains entrenched, as both nations continue to navigate a volatile relationship marked by mutual distrust, strategic missteps, and ideological rigidity. Despite occasional openings toward diplomacy, the overarching narrative remains mired in threats and war talk that has dominated the discourse since the George W. Bush and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad era. During that time, the rhetoric was intensely confrontational, with Iran defying American might and the US listing Iran in its "Axis of Evil." These hostilities gave rise to persistent predictions of an impending war, a drumbeat that, although tiresome in its repetitiveness, still incites alarm. The idea of military action against Iran has never been far from the minds of US policymakers, especially within the Republican establishment, where calls for strikes have often been viewed as rational responses rather than radical measures. Activist groups like Code Pink have been marginalized despite their calls for diplomacy and peace. Even during Obama's tenure, fears of war persisted until more moderate Iranian leadership emerged. Still, the media's portrayal of Iran as an existential threat has fed into negative public perceptions—Americans rarely express favorable views of the country, which has deepened the divide be-



tween the people of both nations. The lesson from Iraq's devastating war, a campaign widely regarded as a strategic blunder, should have served as a deterrent. Yet Iran, with a far larger population and complex political landscape, remains under the shadow of similar saber-rattling. Internally,

Iran's leadership lacks a cohesive vision, increasingly seen as prioritizing ideological expansion over national welfare. The Revolutionary Guards' external adventurism, combined with disregard for cultural traditions and a worsening economic crisis, has alienated many Iranians. Power blackouts,

hyperinflation, and sanctions have left the public wondering about the true cost of Iran's nuclear pursuits. On the US side, foreign policy has taken a more eccentric tone. From suggestions of annexing Canada to speculation about military action in the Middle East, unpredictability defines Wash-

ington's posture. Despite this, former President Donald Trump has sought a diplomatic solution, even sending a personal letter to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei via an Emirati intermediary. Khamenei responded by approving indirect talks, now scheduled in Oman, while also issuing a stern warning against aggression. A breakthrough seems possible but precarious, with Trump reportedly setting a two-month deadline for progress. The renewed direct military clash between Iran and Israel, triggered by attacks in April 2024, has shattered whatever restraint previously existed in their proxy conflict. Amid these tensions, figures like US envoy Steve Witkoff have attempted to reopen channels through cautious messaging, even briefly engaging with Iranian officials online over the JCPOA terms. While predictions remain speculative, and skepticism is warranted, even a limited agreement would be preferable to continued escalation. Iran's dire governance rankings reflect systemic dysfunctions that go beyond foreign policy. But any constructive engagement between Washington and Tehran could signal hope—not just for a reset in relations, but for the millions in the region who remain trapped in a cycle of conflict. The world stands to benefit whenever this overdue understanding materializes.

RBI Cuts Repo Rate by 25 Basis Points to 6% Amid Global Trade Uncertainty



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reduced the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6%, with the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voting unanimously in favor of the move. The decision, announced on Wednesday, is aimed at supporting economic growth and easing the interest burden on borrowers with home, auto, and other loans. However, this reduction is expected to lower the interest earned on savings for depositors.

This rate cut comes amid growing concerns over the global trade war, particularly the impact of U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs. In light of these challenges, the MPC has also revised its growth forecast for India's GDP in 2025-26, lowering it from 6.7% to 6.5%.

This marks the second consecutive rate cut by the RBI, following a 25 basis point reduction in the previous policy meeting. The committee, led by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, also shifted its policy stance from neutral to accommodative, signaling a more growth-focused approach. This change indicates the RBI's growing concern about the potential impact of the trade war on domestic economic growth, rather than inflation risks. The shift in stance suggests the possibility of further rate cuts in the future to stimulate the economy.

Governor Malhotra highlighted that global uncertainty, particularly the escalating trade tensions, could dampen investment and spending by businesses and households, negatively impacting domestic growth. Additionally, higher tariffs are expected to hurt India's exports.

On inflation, Malhotra noted that while global volatility posed some risks, including currency pressures and imported inflation, the domestic inflation outlook remained relatively stable. Inflation risks are seen as two-sided, with a slowdown in global growth potentially softening commodity and crude oil prices.

Looking ahead, RBI projects India's GDP growth for 2025-26 at 6.5%, with inflation expected to remain at 4% for the year. Despite ongoing global uncertainties, the RBI remains committed to using monetary policy to ensure a balanced and stable economic environment.

India ends transshipment facility for Bangladesh exports, cites congestion

- Bangladesh-Nepal/Bhutan trade routes unaffected.
- Yunus' China remarks add diplomatic tension.
- Visa, trade issues strain bilateral ties further.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

India has withdrawn the transshipment facility extended to Bangladesh due to the significant congestion it was causing at Indian airports and ports, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirmed on Wednesday. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal clarified that the decision, effective from April 8, 2025, is not intended to affect Bangladesh's trade with Nepal or Bhutan.

The transshipment facility, which had been in place since June 2020, allowed cargo from Bangladesh to transit through Indian land customs stations before being sent to their final destinations using Indian ports and airports. This move was essential for Bangladesh's exports, particularly ready-made items, to third countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar. However, over time, the facility had resulted in logistical delays and congestion, which hindered India's own exports and led to backlogs, prompting the decision to terminate the arrangement.

Jaiswal explained that although the transshipment facility was withdrawn, it would not disrupt Bangladesh's exports to Nepal or Bhutan through Indian territory. He also emphasized that the decision was a logistical one and not



related to any political developments.

The decision follows controversial remarks by Prof. Muhammad Yunus, the Chief Adviser to Bangladesh's interim government, who visited Beijing and advocated for stronger trade ties between China and India's northeastern states using Bangladeshi ports. Yunus' statements, made during a roundtable discussion in China, were met with criticism in India, with Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma calling them "offensive and highly condemnable."

While Indian officials have refrained from confirming whether Yunus' remarks influenced the withdrawal of the transshipment facility, the timing of the move, just days before the New Year festivities in Dhaka, has been perceived as a setback to bilateral trade. This development follows ongoing concerns over the limited issuance of Indian visas to Bangladesh's business community, further straining economic ties.

The issue highlights the ongoing complexities in India-Bangladesh relations, with trade, logistics, and diplomatic considerations all playing significant roles.

Congress Demands Caste Census, Rahul Gandhi Slams Waqf Bill and RSS

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, denounced the Waqf (Amendment) Act, calling it "anti-Constitution" and a direct attack on religious freedoms. Speaking at the AICC session held on the banks of the Sabarmati River, Gandhi raised concerns that the BJP and RSS would soon target the rights of other minorities, particularly Christians and Sikhs, following the passage of the Waqf Bill.

Gandhi claimed that the new law undermines the constitutional rights of religious minorities in India, specifically accusing the government of orchestrating an agenda to curb religious freedoms. He cited an article in an RSS-affiliated magazine that allegedly suggested that the BJP and RSS are now focused on limiting the rights of Christians, with Sikhs potentially being next in line.

In his address, Gandhi also warned of an impending "economic storm," attributing it to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's subservience to U.S. President Donald Trump, especially regarding the imposition of tariffs. He criticized Modi for failing to challenge Trump's actions, referencing a recent meeting between the two leaders where Trump's decision to impose new tariffs on Indian goods went unopposed. "Did you see the photograph of PM Modi hugging Mr. Trump? This time he ordered Modi ji that 'we



will not hug but will impose new tariffs,'" Gandhi remarked. Furthermore, Gandhi took a jibe at Modi's recent interaction with Bangladesh's Chief Advisor Mohammad Yunus, suggesting that the Prime Minister's silence on Yunus' remarks was in stark contrast to his usual bold rhetoric. "Where is the 56-inch chest?" Gandhi quipped, mocking Modi's strength and resolve.

On the issue of caste-based reservations, Gandhi reiterated his support for a national caste census, calling for an expansion of the reservation system and mentioning that Telangana had already made strides in this area. He also emphasized that the Congress party would continue to fight for constitutional values against what he described as an RSS-led push to control India's institutions. "We have truth and the love of the people on our side," he concluded.



Gold Prices Spiked Amid Global Trade Tensions and US Tariffs

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Gold prices have surged, driven by concerns over a potential global economic slowdown triggered by U.S. President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs on Chinese imports. In India, the price of 24-karat gold has risen to ₹8,972 per gram, while 22-karat gold is priced at ₹8,224, and 18-karat gold stands at ₹6,729 per gram, according to Goodreturns.

The U.S. dollar weakened ahead of the tariff rollout, making gold, priced in dollars, more attractive to foreign buyers. Trump's administration imposed a significant 104% tariff on Chinese imports and outlined plans for a baseline 10% import duty on other goods. China responded defiantly, labeling the move as "blackmail" and vowing to "fight to the end."

Tim Waterer, Chief Market Analyst at KCM Trade, explained that the downward shift in the dollar due to tariff concerns allowed gold to reclaim the \$3,000 level. Despite some volatility, Waterer indicated that gold could reach new all-time highs, citing uncertainty around global growth and inflation as key drivers.

Gold reached a record high of \$3,167.57 on April 3, mirroring the surge in 1980 during the Iranian Revolution when political risks and inflation fears dominated markets. Investor appetite for gold remains strong, with gold-backed exchange-traded funds seeing the largest quarterly inflows in three years, according to the World Gold Council.

However, rising U.S. bond yields capped some of gold's gains, as the 10-year Treasury yield hit its highest level in over a week, reducing the appeal of non-yielding bullion. Looking ahead, market participants are awaiting the release of the U.S. Federal Reserve's meeting minutes and upcoming inflation data, including the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Producer Price Index (PPI), later this week.

Analysts, including Rahul Kalantri, VP of Commodities at Mehta Equities, remain cautious, noting that while gold surged due to short-covering and bargain buying, it lost steam after the U.S. announced the tariff changes. Kalantri suggests that gold could face support at \$2,978-\$2,955 per ounce and resistance at \$3,040-\$3,065 per ounce in global markets, with similar levels for Indian gold prices. Analysts believe that gold's upward trajectory may continue as macroeconomic uncertainties persist.

India's naval aviation gets a boost: Rafale-Marine jets approved for acquisition

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a major boost to India's naval aviation, the Cabinet Committee on Security, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the purchase of 26 Rafale-Marine fighter jets from French aviation giant Dassault, at an estimated cost of ₹63,000 crore. This acquisition is aimed at enhancing the Indian Navy's offensive capabilities, especially for operations at sea. The jets will be deployed on India's indigenously built aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, and are expected to significantly strengthen the Navy's ability to carry out longer-range precision strikes against both aerial and maritime threats.

The deal, which includes weapons, simulators, training, spares, and maintenance support, will also fea-



ture India-specific modifications. These additions include the integration of India's Astra missile system, setting up a maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) hub, and sourcing components from local suppliers. The Rafale-Marine jets are equipped with advanced armament systems, including the SCALP-EG, a 650-km range cruise missile.

These fighter jets will consist of 22 single-seater and four twin-seater variants, designed to complement the Navy's existing aircraft fleet. The Rafale-Marine's operational features include reinforced landing gear and foldable wings, allowing efficient storage aboard aircraft carriers. This capability will be crucial, as the jets can operate in the constrained space of

a carrier's deck, unlike land-based aircraft that rely on long runways.

While the deal comes at a higher price compared to the IAF's 36 Rafale jets, which were purchased for ₹59,000 crore in 2016, the cost difference is attributed to inflation, the increased exchange rates of the dollar and euro, and a decade gap between the two deals.

Additionally, in case of an emergency, these jets can be deployed to Indian Air Force bases along the northern borders, bolstering the IAF's fleet of Rafale jets. This move represents a significant upgrade to India's naval aviation, as it replaces the Russian-origin MiG-29K jets, some of which have faced operational challenges since their induction in 2011.



Russia Invites PM Modi to Attend 80th Anniversary of Victory Day Celebrations

- **Event marks 80 years since Nazi Germany’s defeat.**
- **Putin accepted Modi’s earlier India visit invite.**
- **Ties grow stronger in defense and diplomacy.**

TPN Correspondent | Moscow

Russia has extended an invitation to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the May 9 celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, as confirmed by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Rudenko. The invitation has been sent, and preparations for the Prime Minister's visit are currently underway.

Speaking to Russian news agency Tass, Rudenko stated, "Moscow is expecting the Indian Prime Minister at the May 9 parade. The invitation has already been sent, and the visit is being worked out. It should take place this year."

Victory Day, celebrated on May 9, commemorates the signing of the Act of Unconditional Surrender by Germany in 1945, effectively bringing an end to World War II. This year's celebrations will mark the 80th anniversary of that pivotal moment in history, and Russia has invited leaders from several friendly nations to join in the commemorations.

In July 2024, Prime Minister Modi visited Russia for the first time in nearly five years. During this visit, he also extended an invitation to Russian President Vladimir Putin to visit India, an invitation that Putin has accepted. However, the specific dates for Putin's trip to India have yet to be disclosed.

Prime Minister Modi and President Putin maintain a strong diplomatic relationship, characterized by regular communication through telephone calls and in-person meetings, especially during international events. The two leaders' ongoing collaboration underscores the close ties between India and Russia, particularly in areas such as defense, trade, and geopolitical cooperation.

The invitation to Modi to participate in the Victory Day parade reflects the deepening bilateral ties between the two nations and signifies the importance of their strategic partnership on the global stage.

US Bill Threatens to End Work Visa for Indian Students, Creating Uncertainty for 300,000

TPN Correspondent | US

A proposed bill in the United States Congress is poised to disrupt the Optional Practical Training (OPT) program, a vital work authorization initiative for international students, particularly those in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. This development has caused major concern among the Indian student community in the US, with over 300,000 students potentially impacted.

The OPT program allows international students to gain practical work experience in the US for up to three years after graduation. Indian students are the largest beneficiaries of this program, with nearly 98,000 participants in the 2023-2024 academic year, according to the Open Doors 2024 report. The proposed bill could force these students to leave the US immediately after graduation, disrupting their careers and financial stability, as many rely on OPT to repay hefty student loans.

If passed, the bill would severely limit job opportunities for Indian students, compelling them to seek work in countries with more accommodating post-study policies, like Canada or those in Europe. This could also negatively impact the US job market, especially in STEM fields, where international students play a crucial role in addressing



skill shortages. In response, many students are rushing to secure H-1B work visas, which are sponsored primarily by large tech companies. However, these visas are highly competitive, with a limited number of slots each year. Students are now scrambling to secure job offers that would enable them to apply for an H-1B visa before any changes take effect.

Legal experts, such as Poorvi Chothani of LawQuest, have stressed the urgency of the situation. The OPT program provides stu-

dents up to three years of work experience, but if the bill passes, many may be forced to leave the US immediately after graduation, losing valuable career opportunities.

Amidst this uncertainty, many students have cancelled summer travel plans, fearing they may not be allowed to re-enter the country. Prestigious institutions like Cornell and Yale have unofficially advised international students to avoid traveling home during breaks, further exacerbating the sense of instability.

Girl Dies, 20 More Including Pawan Kalyan's Son Injured In Singapore School Fire

TPN Correspondent | Singapore

A devastating fire at a shophouse in Singapore's River Valley Road area resulted in the death of a 10-year-old girl and left 20 others injured on Tuesday. Among the injured was the seven-year-old son of Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan.

The fire broke out at a three-storey building that housed educational and enrichment classes for children, including cooking, theatre, and robotics schools. At the time of the incident, 16 children aged six to 10 and six adults were present in the building. The fire spread quickly through the second and third floors of the building, causing severe burns and smoke inhalation among the victims.

The police confirmed that the girl who died later in a hospital was among those rescued, though several others sustained significant injuries. Eyewitnesses described harrowing scenes, with some of the children unconscious, their eyes rolled back, and suffering from burns. Mark Shankar, Pawan Kalyan's



younger son, was injured with burns to his hands and legs and suffered from smoke inhalation but is currently receiving treatment.

The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) responded swiftly, extinguishing the fire within 30 minutes using three water jets. They evacuated around 80 people from the building and surrounding areas. Approxi-

mately 20 individuals were taken to nearby hospitals for treatment.

A group of construction workers nearby acted quickly during the fire, using scaffolding and a ladder to rescue the trapped children. One of the workers, Subramanian Saranraj, expressed his concern for

the children, saying, "I was scared for the children, because they were so small and couldn't climb out on their own."

The cause of the fire is under investigation, and authorities have not suspected foul play. However, the tragedy has deeply impacted the local community, with many parents anxiously awaiting news about their children's safety.

Fugitive Businessman Vijay Mallya Loses Appeal Against UK Bankruptcy Order

TPN Correspondent | London

Indian businessman Vijay Mallya lost his appeal against a bankruptcy order issued by London's High Court on Wednesday, concerning a debt of over £1 billion (\$1.28 billion) owed to several lenders, including the State Bank of India. Mallya, who resides in Britain, has been at the center of a prolonged legal dispute with both Indian authorities and financial institutions following the 2012 collapse of his now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines.

In 2017, a group of banks obtained a ruling in India that held Mallya responsible for the massive debt tied to Kingfisher Airlines, for which he had personally guaranteed the loan. The judgment, totaling more than £1 billion, was later registered in the UK. This led to a bankruptcy order being issued against Mallya in 2021.

Mallya appealed the bankruptcy order, arguing during a February hearing that the banks had already recovered enough assets to effectively settle the debt. However, Judge Anthony Mann rejected his appeal on Tuesday, stating in his written ruling that "the bottom line... is that the bankruptcy order stands."

Mallya's legal team did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the latest ruling.

In addition to the bankruptcy case, Mallya is also facing extradition to India to stand trial for



fraud charges linked to the collapse of Kingfisher Airlines. His appeal against extradition was rejected in 2020. Despite this, Judge Mann noted in his ruling that the extradition order "has still not been enforced," adding that Mallya continues to resist extradition on other legal grounds that remain unresolved.

Mallya, who was also a co-owner of the Force India Formula One racing team, has been living in the UK since fleeing India in 2016, following allegations of financial mismanagement and defaulting on loans. The legal battle continues as both India and the UK work through the complex proceedings surrounding his case.

Myanmar In Need Of Relief and Long Term Support After Quake: Thailand

TPN Correspondent | Myanmar

Myanmar remains in dire need of medical assistance, field hospitals, and shelter following the devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck the country on March 28. Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa highlighted the urgency of a coordinated regional relief effort and long-term support for Myanmar, which is still reeling from one of the strongest quakes to hit the region in a century.

The earthquake, which jolted a region home to 28 million people, caused massive destruction. Buildings collapsed, entire communities were flattened, and essential resources like food, water, and shelter became scarce. According to Myanmar's military government, the earthquake claimed 3,645 lives, left 5,017 people injured, and left 148 missing. Nearly 49,000 homes and over 2,100 government buildings were destroyed.

Maris, along with Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan, visited the quake-hit capital Naypyitaw on Saturday to assess the situation. In an interview, Maris emphasized the urgent need for field hospitals, as many existing medical facilities were unable to function at full capacity due to damage from the quake. Temporary shelters, mosquito nets, food, water filters, and clean water supplies are also crucial, with concerns rising about the spread of communicable diseases amid the intense summer heat. The United Nations Office for the Coordination



of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) commended the efforts of over 30 search-and-rescue teams from 13 countries who assisted in the immediate aftermath of the quake. While some teams have now departed, emergency aid continues to arrive, including a fifth batch from China, which brought 91 tonnes of supplies, including tents and mosquito nets.

The earthquake came at a time when Myanmar was already grappling with economic challenges and a civil war triggered by a military coup in 2021. The junta and rebel groups have declared temporary ceasefires to facilitate the relief effort, although tensions remain high.

Maris and his Malaysian counterpart are coordinating efforts for both immediate and long-term assistance, including reconstruction of the devastated areas. Thailand will focus on humanitarian work in Mandalay, while Malaysia will assist in the Sagaing region, both close to the earthquake's epicenter.

"Markets Rattle Under Global Tariff Tensions; Sensex Sheds 379 Points, Nifty Falls 136 Despite RBI Rate Cut"

Domestic stock markets suffered heavy losses on Wednesday. The escalation of the tariff war between the US and China, negative signals from global markets, and expectations of disruption to the supply chain worldwide have increased negative sentiment in the market. Investors remained cautious even after the RBI cut interest rates as it was not known how long the uncertainty would last. The selling spree continued in the finance, IT, media, metal and pharma sectors. Overall, the Nifty lost 136 points and the Sensex lost 379 points. The India VIX also reached 21.43.



The BSE Sensex, which closed at 74,227 in the previous session, opened at 74,103 on Wednesday. It touched an intraday low of 73,673. It reached an intraday high of 74,103. It finally closed

at 73,847, losing 379 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 22,460, touched a low of 22,353 and a high of 22,468. It closed at 22,399, down 136 points. The

Nifty Bank fell 270 points to settle at 50,240. Of the Nifty50, 18 companies gained while 32 lost. Nestle India, Hindustan

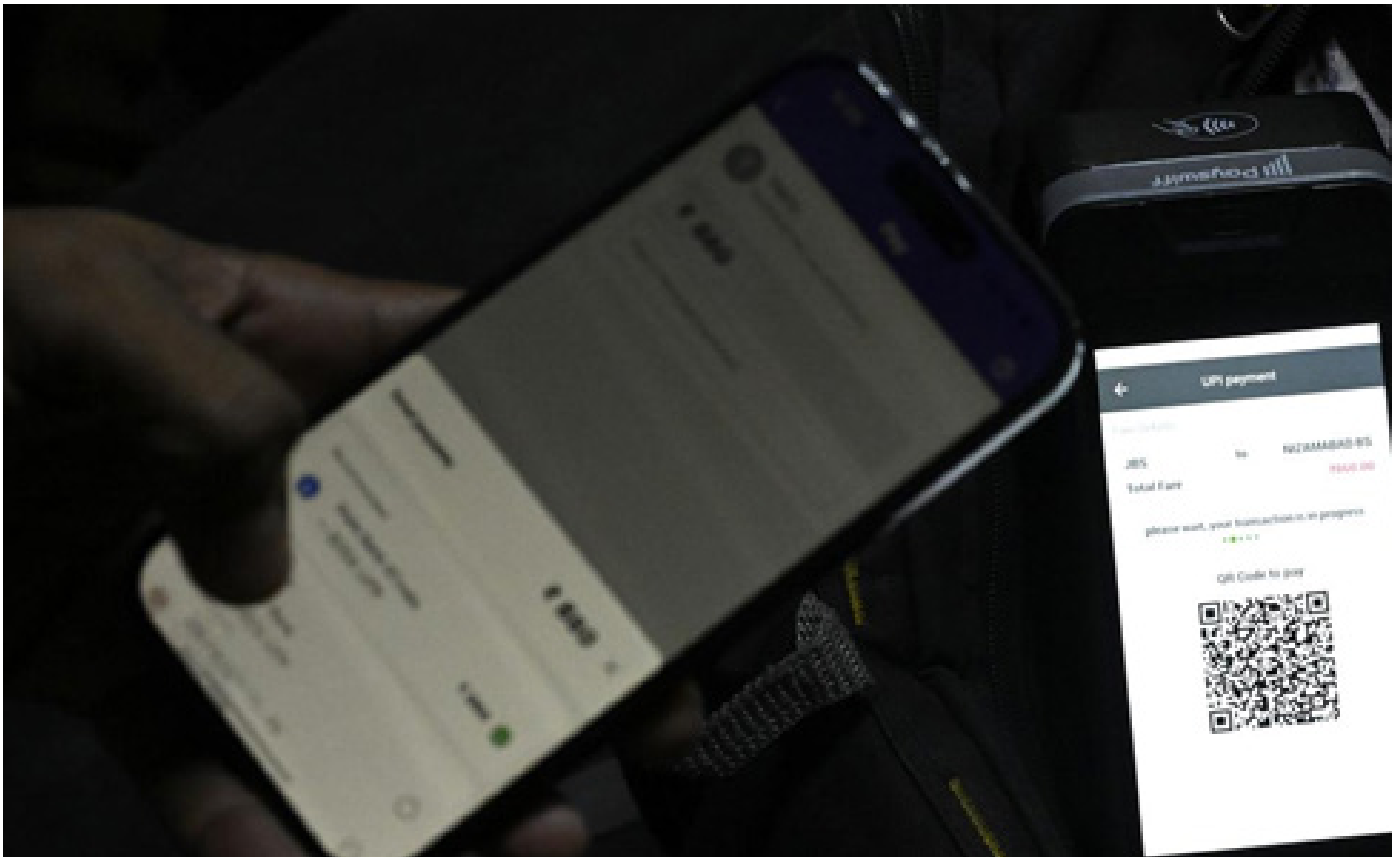
Unilever, Titan, Power Grid, Tata Consumer were the top gainers. Wipro, SBI, Tech Mahindra, LT, Trent suffered the most losses. Meanwhile, the Fear Index India Vicks rose 4.8% to settle at 21.43. Today, all sectoral indices, except FMCG and consumer durables, turned red. Finance, IT, media, metal, pharma, PSU bank, private bank, realty, healthcare and oil indices were volatile.

Market breadth on NSE turned in favour of sellers. Out of 2909 shares traded, 1083 gained and 1747 lost. 19 shares hit 52-week highs and 45 shares hit 52-week lows. 80 shares touched the upper circuit and 52 shares touched the lower circuit. Rupee weakened by 45 paise to settle at 86.69 against the dollar. 21

lakh shares changed hands in NICA. IDBI Bank shares rose after Deepam Secretary said that the disinvestment process is continuing steadily. APL Apollo Tubes issued commercial papers worth Rs 200 crore. ShilpaMedicare has been approved by the USFDA for Verinical tablets. William O'Neill has given a buy rating to Radico Khaitan. Investec has given a buy rating to Vedanta with a target price of Rs 510. 10 lakh shares changed hands in ITC. Shyam Metallic stainless steel sales grew by 13%. Home First Finance has launched a QIP with the aim of raising Rs 1250 crore. Dam Capital has given a buy rating to Affil India with a target price of Rs 1730. RBI has cut the repo rate by 25 basis points.



RBI Approves Revised UPI Transaction Limits for Person-to-Merchant Payments



Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has been permitted to increase transaction limits for Unified Payments Interface (UPI) payments between persons and merchants (P2M), based on evolving user needs.

UPI, a real-time payment system, enables seamless transactions between bank accounts via mobile apps. Currently, the transaction limit for UPI payments, including both Person-to-Person (P2P) and Person-to-Merchant (P2M) transactions, is capped at ₹1 lakh. However, certain P2M transactions already have higher limits, with some set at ₹2 lakh and others at ₹5 lakh, depending on the use case.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra stated that NPCI will revise these limits in consultation with banks and other stakeholders in the UPI ecosystem to address the changing requirements of users. Appropriate safeguards will be introduced to mitigate risks associated with these higher transaction limits. It was emphasized that while P2M payments may see revised limits, P2P transactions will remain capped at ₹1 lakh.

In addition to the UPI update, Governor Malhotra outlined other key developments. The RBI is set to review guidelines related to loans against gold jewellery, aiming to harmonize regulations across regulated entities (REs) while considering their risk-taking capabilities.

Draft guidelines for public comment will be issued soon.

Furthermore, the RBI proposes to make the Regulatory Sandbox (RS) framework 'theme neutral' and available on-demand, promoting continuous innovation within India's rapidly evolving fintech space. The central bank also plans to introduce a draft framework for the securitization of stressed assets and expand the scope of co-lending arrangements among regulated entities.

The RBI's proactive approach to regulating the fintech and lending sectors aims to streamline processes and foster innovation while ensuring the stability of India's financial ecosystem.

IRDAI Imposes ₹1.06 Crore Penalty on Flipkart for Insurance Norm Violations

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has imposed a total penalty of ₹1.06 crore on Flipkart for violations related to insurance e-commerce and corporate agent regulations. The fine comprises ₹1 crore for breaching the Insurance E-commerce Guidelines, 2017, and ₹6 lakh for selling insurance policies without a valid certificate of registration.

The penalty stems from Flipkart's improper use of its Insurance Self-Network Platform (ISNP), which was initially approved for facilitating direct online solicitation of insurance policies with insurers. However, regulatory investigations revealed that when users clicked on the "buy insurance" button on Flipkart's website, they were redirected to a third-party insurance intermediary's page to complete their purchase. IRDAI found that this redirection was not merely a form of advertisement but an unauthorized method of insurance solicitation, violating regulatory norms.

While Flipkart argued that it only provided advertising space for the intermediary and had no referral agreement, the regulator determined that the financial ar-

rangement went beyond advertising and constituted a violation. Following IRDAI's notice, Flipkart discontinued the redirection.

Additionally, Flipkart faced a ₹6 lakh fine for continuing to sell insurance policies after applying for the renewal of its registration certificate. The IRDAI clarified that the filing of a renewal application does not automatically extend registration, and selling policies without valid registration violated specific regulatory provisions.

IRDAI has directed Flipkart to pay the ₹1.06 crore fine within 45 days and informed the company's board of the decision. Flipkart has the option to appeal the order before the Securities Appellate Tribunal.

Although IRDAI imposed penalties for other violations, including the procurement of a large number of policies by a single individual, it refrained from pressing charges related to governance issues. Flipkart has committed to reviewing the order, maintaining its commitment to regulatory compliance and high governance standards.



SEBI Forms High-Level Committee to Address Conflict of Interest in Securities Market Regulators



The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has established a high-level committee (HLC) to review and address conflicts of interest among the board members and employees of securities market regulators. This decision follows a directive made at SEBI's board meeting last month.

In its circular, SEBI outlined that the committee would thoroughly assess and recommend improvements to the existing framework for managing conflicts of interest, disclosures, and related issues. The goal is to ensure higher standards of transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct among SEBI officials and board members.

The committee will be chaired by Pratyush Sinha, a former Chief Vigilance Commissioner, and will include several distinguished former bureaucrats and experts. Notable members of the committee include Inejit Srinivas, former Secretary at the Ministry of Corporate Affairs; G. Mahalingam, former Whole-Time Member of SEBI; Sarit Jafa, former Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General; Uday Kotak, founder of Kotak Mahindra Bank; and R. Narayanaswamy, former professor at IIM Bangalore.

The committee's mandate includes reviewing SEBI's current policies, identi-

fying any gaps, and recommending a comprehensive framework to mitigate conflicts of interest. It will also explore mechanisms that will allow the public to raise concerns regarding potential conflicts of interest within the securities market regulators.

This initiative is part of SEBI's ongoing efforts to enhance the integrity of the securities market by ensuring that its regulators uphold the highest standards of ethical behavior. The committee's recommendations will be pivotal in shaping future regulations aimed at fostering greater transparency and accountability within the sector.

Teen Marries 41-Year-Old, Starts Family

In a story that’s both unconventional and heartwarming, a 19-year-old woman named Iyah from the United States has married a 41-year-old man, Rafah, defying societal norms and proving that love truly knows no age. The couple first met at a bar where Iyah was employed, leading Rafah to believe she was older due to her maturity and professional demeanor. It was only later that he learned she was just 19. Despite the 21-year age difference, their bond

grew stronger, culminating in marriage and the start of a family. The couple has since welcomed a child and actively shares their journey through their joint YouTube channel, “That’s So Raf & Iyah.” Their relationship has attracted significant attention online, sparking both criticism and praise. While some social media users have questioned the large age gap and raised concerns about compatibility and power dynamics, many others have come out

in support, celebrating their love and commitment. Supporters argue that as long as the relationship is built on mutual respect, understanding, and consent, age should not be a barrier to love. Iyah and Rafah have openly addressed the backlash, standing by the authenticity of their relationship and showing confidence in their decision to build a life together. Their story challenges traditional expectations that typically favor couples of similar age and highlights the

evolving nature of modern relationships. In an era where social media amplifies both admiration and scrutiny, the couple has embraced their journey with resilience and transparency. Whether viewed as controversial or inspirational, their union has certainly captured the attention of people around the world, reinforcing the idea that real connection often transcends numbers and that love, in its truest form, can emerge in the most unexpected ways.



Mumbai Tops Uber's List of Forgetful Cities



In a quirky yet revealing roundup, Mumbai has earned the distinction of being India's most forgetful city, according to Uber's latest Lost and Found Index for 2024. The report, based on data gathered from rides across the country, showcases not only the frequency but also the variety of items left behind by riders—and Mumbai's list is both amusing and astonishing. While expected items like mobile phones, wallets, bags, and keys featured prominently, the city's residents also managed to forget some truly unexpected belongings, including a wheelchair, telescope, hair wig, a dog bark control device, and even a hawan kund (a fire altar used in Hindu rituals). In one of the more surprising discoveries, a rider even left behind a gold biscuit, and another forgot their entire wedding saree. Someone managed to misplace 25 kilograms of cow ghee, while another left a cooking stove behind in the cab. These strange but true tales have put Mumbai at the top, displacing Delhi, which had held the title for the past two years. The report also notes that Hyderabad ranked as the least forgetful city in India. Aside from the bizarre items, the most commonly forgotten essentials nationwide include earphones, spectacles, clothing, and even important documents. Uber's annual index not only serves as a humorous reminder of how distracted or hurried people can be during their daily commute but also emphasizes the scale at which such lapses occur. The company encourages users to double-check their belongings at the end of each trip and also provides a lost item feature within the app for recovery assistance. While the findings may seem comical, they underscore how fast-paced life in urban India has become—where even gold biscuits and wedding attire can be left behind in a rush.



Retired Officer Attacked Over Waqf Bill

A retired Indian Army officer was allegedly attacked by a cab driver and his associates following a heated argument over the Waqf Amendment Bill during a road trip from Lucknow to Kanpur. The incident took place on April 5 in Unnao, Uttar Pradesh. The victim, Colonel Surya Prakash Singh (Retd), currently serving as the head of the District Sainik Welfare Board in Kanpur, had hired a private cab for the journey. According to Singh's complaint, the confrontation began during a political discussion with the driver, identified as Wasim from Begumpurwa in Kanpur. Singh said the situation escalated after he expressed support for the Waqf Amendment Bill, which appeared to provoke the driver. Following the argument, Wasim allegedly stopped the vehicle at the Azad Nagar intersection in Unnao and called his associates. A group of men arrived soon after and reportedly assaulted the retired officer along with the driver. Singh subsequently lodged a formal complaint with the local police against Wasim and the unidentified attackers. Authorities have registered a case and launched an investigation into the matter. The assault, believed to be fueled by ideological differences, has raised concerns over growing intolerance surrounding political and religious opinions. The Waqf Amendment Bill has been a topic of national debate, with strong sentiments on both sides, and this incident underscores the volatility such discussions can provoke. Police officials have confirmed that an inquiry is underway and assured that appropriate legal action will follow based on the evidence and testimonies gathered. No arrests have been made so far. As the investigation progresses, the case continues to draw attention as an alarming example of discourse turning into violence.

Wife Publicly Assaults Husband Over Joblessness

In a deeply unsettling incident that has gone viral on social media, a woman was captured on camera physically assaulting a man, reportedly her husband, in a public place. The video, which has stirred intense debate online, shows the woman holding the man aggressively by his collar and repeatedly slapping him while berating him for not earning. The altercation took place in front of a shop, and although a crowd gathered around the scene, no one stepped in to stop the violence or even question the woman's actions. The clip clearly captures her shouting that he doesn't contribute financially, using his alleged unemployment as a justification for the assault. The man, visibly passive and humiliated, did not retaliate, further intensifying public sympathy and concern. What shocked viewers even more was the complete lack of intervention from bystanders, raising questions about societal apathy and the perception of male victims in cases of domestic abuse. As the video spread rapidly across platforms like X (formerly Twitter), users expressed outrage, asking, “Who gave her the right?” and emphasizing that violence cannot be tolerated under any circumstance, regardless of gender. Many netizens condemned the



act, calling for accountability and urging that domestic abuse be recognized and addressed with gender neutrality. The incident has reignited conversations around men facing abuse in relationships—an often overlooked issue that remains largely unspoken due to social stigma. Legal experts and activists have

also weighed in, pointing out the urgent need for balanced discourse and protection for all victims of domestic violence. As of now, authorities have not made an official statement on the incident, but growing online pressure could prompt a formal response or investigation in the coming days.

Texas Lawyer's \$1M Birthday Giveaway



In a gesture that has left the internet stunned, prominent Texas attorney Thomas J. Henry has announced that he will be giving away \$1 million to strangers to celebrate his birthday. The well-known lawyer, often associated with high-profile cases and lavish parties, revealed on Instagram that he is

forgoing the usual extravagant celebrations this year. Instead, Henry said he wanted to mark his birthday—April 5—by doing something meaningful and giving back to the community. In a video message posted to his official social media accounts, he shared that this decision came from a deep sense of

gratitude toward those who have supported him throughout his life and career. The Instagram posts immediately caught fire online, with users praising his selfless act and calling it a rare example of generosity in a world often dominated by materialism and showmanship. While the exact mechanism for how the \$1 million will be distributed has not yet been made public, Henry's announcement sparked massive interest, with thousands of comments flooding in from people all over the country. Many lauded him not only for his charitable mindset but also for using his personal celebration to spotlight the value of kindness and giving. Social media users described the initiative as inspiring and uplifting, with some hoping this might set a trend among other wealthy public figures. Known for his philanthropic efforts in the past, this bold birthday gesture has only cemented Henry's reputation as a generous and socially conscious figure. As the details of the giveaway unfold, many are watching closely to see how this extraordinary promise will be executed. One thing is certain: Thomas J. Henry's birthday celebration has already made a mark far beyond cakes and candles.

US Woman Marries Andhra Man

In a heartwarming story that has captured the internet's imagination, a woman from the United States traveled all the way to a remote village in Andhra Pradesh, India, to marry the love of her life. Jaclyn Forero, a professional photographer, and Chandan, a young man from Andhra, first connected on Instagram when their relationship began with a simple “Hi.” Despite the cultural differences and a nine-year age gap—Jaclyn being older—the two bonded over genuine conversations and emotional connection. Their long-distance love blossomed over 14 months of virtual dating, filled with shared experiences, heartfelt chats, and growing admiration. What started as a casual conversation eventually turned into a deep and committed relationship. Touched by Chandan's simplicity and authenticity, Jaclyn made the bold decision to travel thousands of miles to meet him in person for the first time—and to marry him. Their meeting in Andhra Pradesh culminated in a beautiful and emotional moment, as they decided to begin their new journey together as husband and wife. Sharing



the news with her followers, Jaclyn posted on Instagram: “14 months together and ready for a BIG new chapter,” signaling their next step as a couple. Their story has since gone viral, winning hearts across the globe for its sincerity and fairytale-like essence. Social media users have been showering the couple



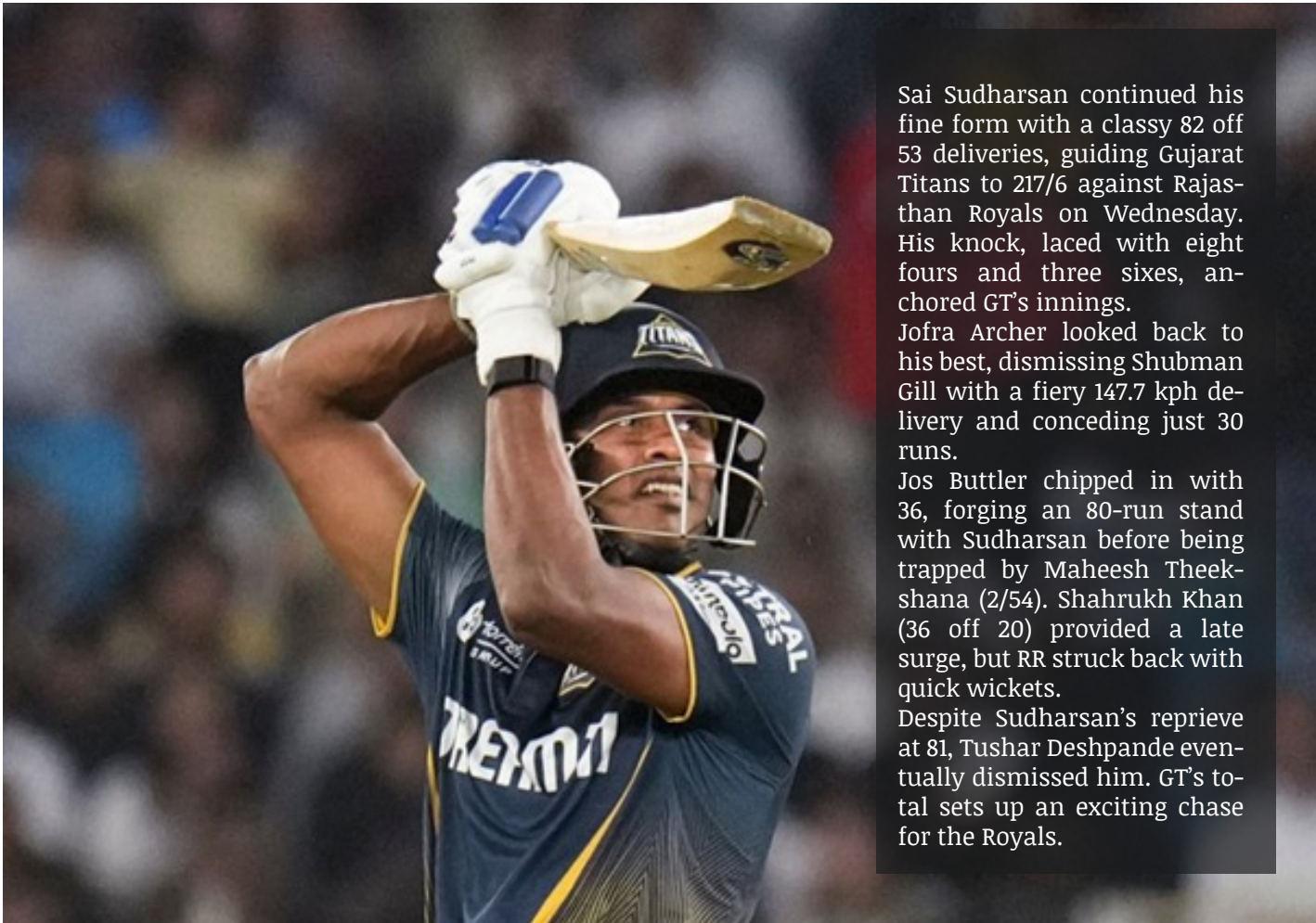
with love and well wishes, calling their bond an inspiring example of love that knows no boundaries—be it geography, culture, or age. The couple's journey has not only become a trending topic but also a reminder that true love can bloom anywhere, even between two people from opposite sides of the world.



Much-Awaited Pro Panja League Season 2 to Begin on August 5

The adrenaline-packed Pro Panja League is all set to make its much-anticipated return with Season 2 kicking off on August 5, right after the conclusion of India's Test series against England on August 4. The competition will once again be telecast on Sony Sports Network, bringing top arm wrestlers from across the country into the spotlight. Following a successful debut season, which saw Kochi KD's clinch the title in a nail-biting final, the Pro Panja League will follow a franchise-based IPL-style format across 17 action-filled days. With a strong base already established, the league aims to grow even further this year. According to BARC data, Season 1 attracted over 32 million unique viewers, outperforming many new sports leagues in India. The momentum is now set to continue, with fans eagerly awaiting the clash of power, skill, and strategy on the panja table. Parvinn Dabass, co-founder of the league, expressed enthusiasm over the response the league has garnered. "We were overwhelmed with the response to Season 1. Arm wrestling has grown immensely since then, and Season 2 is going to be even bigger. Athletes are more prepared, and fans can expect unmatched entertainment." He also highlighted the recent Mizoram Mega Matches, where attendance surged between 15,000 to 20,000, reflecting the sport's growing fan base. "This is no longer just a game played at tea stalls—it's now a full-fledged professional sport."

Sai Sudharsan's 82 Powers Gujarat Titans to 217/6 Against Royals



Sai Sudharsan continued his fine form with a classy 82 off 53 deliveries, guiding Gujarat Titans to 217/6 against Rajasthan Royals on Wednesday. His knock, laced with eight fours and three sixes, anchored GT's innings. Jofra Archer looked back to his best, dismissing Shubman Gill with a fiery 147.7 kph delivery and conceding just 30 runs. Jos Buttler chipped in with 36, forging an 80-run stand with Sudharsan before being trapped by Maheesh Theekshana (2/54). Shahrukh Khan (36 off 20) provided a late surge, but RR struck back with quick wickets. Despite Sudharsan's reprieve at 81, Tushar Deshpande eventually dismissed him. GT's total sets up an exciting chase for the Royals.



ISPL Sensation Abhishek Dalhor Joins KKR as Net Bowler for IPL

After two stellar seasons in the Indian Street Premier League (ISPL), all-rounder Abhishek Kumar Dalhor has been selected by Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) as a net bowler for the ongoing IPL season. Dalhor, hailing from Ambala, rose to prominence with Majhi Mumbai, the Amitabh Bachchan-owned team, and played a key role in their title-winning campaign in ISPL Season 2. He amassed 324 runs and took 33 wickets in just 19 games, earning accolades such as Player of the Tournament (Season 1) and Best Bowler (Season 2). His inspiring journey—from street tennis-ball cricket to becoming the most expensive player in ISPL history—reflects the league's impact on grassroots cricket.

Telangana Police Marksmen Bag 7 Medals at National Shooting Championship

Telangana Police shooting players brought pride to the state by winning 7 medals at the 18th All India Police Sports Shooting Championship held at Reoti Ranges, BSF, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, from March 24 to 29, 2025.

In the individual event, PC E. Raj Kumar from 8th Battalion TGSP, Kondapur, won a silver medal in the Big Bore 300 mts Rifle 3 Position (3P) Men's category with a score of 572/600. The women's team – WASI V. Suvarna (CP Warangal), WRHC M. Vijayamma (GRP Secunderabad), and

WPC Ch. Madhavi (CAR Nizamabad) – bagged 3 silver medals in the Big Bore 300 mts Rifle Prone Team Event.

In the men's team event, ARSI K. Srinivas Rao (RBVRR, TGPA), HC K. Shyam Sunder (ISW, Hyderabad), and PC K. Raj Kumar (DAR Kamareddy) secured 3 bronze medals in the same category.

DGP Dr. Jitender, IPS, congratulated and felicitated the medal winners. IGP (Sports) M. Ramesh and DSP (Sports) Ramarao were present



during the event, lauding the players' dedication and performance.



Uttarakhand CM Flags Off Team for Khelo Masters National Championship

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami flagged off the state contingent for the fourth Khelo Masters National Championship from his Camp Office on Wednesday. The national-level tournament will take place in New Delhi from April 11 to 13 and features competitions across eight disciplines including athletics, football, basketball, hockey, shooting, badminton, table tennis, and volleyball. The Chief Minister extended best wishes to all participants and credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for boosting sports culture and infrastructure across India. He noted that Uttarakhand's new sports policy is focused on supporting athletes through better facilities and opportunities. The Uttarakhand team will participate under the leadership of Dr. Virendra Singh Rawat, Vice President of the Khelo Masters Games Foundation of Uttarakhand. Athletes from three age groups—40+, 50+, and 60+—will represent the state in football, while athletics will include participants from the 40+ and 70+ categories. Several dignitaries and sports enthusiasts were present during the flag-off ceremony, expressing support for the team's success at the national championship.

Gloves Off, Legacy On: WLF Confirms Return of Bare Knuckle Fighting in Dubai this November



In a bold move that reshaped the global fight calendar, the World League of Fighters (WLF), in partnership with the Dubai Sports Council, successfully hosted Bare Knuckle Fighting Championship (BKFC) 71 and 72 at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Stadium on April 4th and 5th. The back-to-back events featured 44 elite fighters in two electrifying nights of bare-knuckle action, marking the sport's official entry into the Middle East. Co-founders Rajesh Banga and Sunil Mathew called it a "new legacy for combat sports," as fans embraced the unfiltered brutality and authenticity that bare-knuckle fighting offers. UFC legend Conor McGregor's high-profile attendance gave the event a global boost. With the response exceeding expectations, WLF has now confirmed that Chapter 2 of BKFC in Dubai will return in November 2025. Backed by international icons and the Dubai Sports Council, WLF is on a mission to make the UAE the epicentre of combat sports' most explosive new chapter.

DSC Girls' U-17 Nationals: Jharkhand Score 6 in Goal Fest

The Dream Sports Championship Football 2025 Girls' U-17 National Finals kicked off on Wednesday with a flurry of exciting matches and standout performances. Jharkhand FA lit up the day with a resounding 6-2 victory over Goa FA at the Utorada Sports Complex. Rashmi Minz opened the scoring, while captain Alka Indwar, Sanjna Oraon, Anamika Sangga (brace), and Shaulina Dang added to the tally in a dominant display. At SAG Benaulim, Kerala FA secured a 2-0 win over Delhi SA with goals from Meenakshi and Anjana Rajesh. Odisha FA edged past Rajasthan FA 1-0, thanks to a 44th-minute strike by Kiran Deep. In the morning session, Assam FA defeated Karnataka FA 2-0. Karina Narah and Serbirika Terangpi were on target for Assam, sealing a strong start in the tournament.





NTR-Neel Film Enters Key Phase

The much-anticipated collaboration between Jr. NTR and director Prashanth Neel, famed for KGF and Salaar, is gaining momentum. Touted as a massive action drama, the film's production is progressing swiftly. While NTR hasn't been part of the initial shoot, the wait is nearly over—he will join the sets from April 22. This marks a crucial turning point in the project, with excitement peaking among fans eager to see this powerful duo in action. The film, mounted on a grand scale, is set for a pan-India release in multiple languages including Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Kannada,



Malayalam, and more. With both star power and directorial flair in abundance, expectations are sky-

high for what promises to be one of Indian cinema's most explosive cinematic events.

Rajamouli Eyes RRR Date Again

Director S.S. Rajamouli is reportedly planning to release his highly anticipated film SSMB29, starring Mahesh Babu, on March 25, 2027—the same date his global blockbuster RRR hit theatres in 2022. The action-adventure, touted as India's costliest film with a massive ₹1,000 crore budget, began production in January 2025. Two major schedules have already been completed in Hyderabad and Odisha, featuring stars like Priyanka Chopra Jonas and Prithviraj Sukumaran. The team is currently on a short break, with filming set to resume in Hyderabad later this month. March 25, 2027, lands just ahead of the Good Friday holiday and the Telugu New Year, Ugadi, offering a lucrative extended weekend. While not officially confirmed, the release date speculation has already created buzz across the film industry and fans alike.

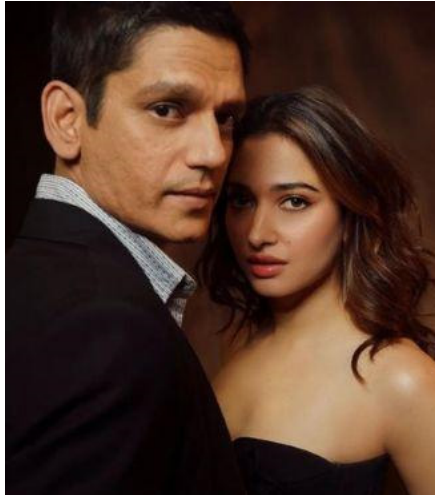


Dhanush, Mari Selvaraj Reunite For D56



Four years after the critically acclaimed Karnan, Dhanush and director Mari Selvaraj are reuniting for their next film, tentatively titled D56. Announced on April 9, the project marks a powerful comeback for the celebrated actor-director duo. The film is being produced by Ishari Ganesh under the Vels Films International banner. Karnan, released in 2021, was praised for its raw storytelling and intense social themes, with Dhanush delivering one of his finest performances. The news of their reunion has stirred excitement among fans and cinephiles, who expect another hard-hitting narrative. Currently, Dhanush is also filming Tere Ishk Mein with Kriti Sanon, directed by Aanand L. Rai, with music by A.R. Rahman. With D56, Dhanush is all set to add another milestone to his stellar filmography.

Tamannaah Opens Up on Tough Time



At the trailer launch of her upcoming Telugu film Odela 2 in Mumbai, Tamannaah Bhatia hinted at going through an emotional rough patch, possibly linked to her rumored breakup with Vijay Var-

ma. Though she didn't name anyone, her cryptic response about inner strength and self-reflection spoke volumes. "Jo bhi hume chahiye, woh humare andar hi hota hai," she said, implying that healing comes from within. Meanwhile, in another headline-making revelation, Om Puri's first wife shared that she left the veteran actor during her pregnancy due to his affair, adding a dramatic twist to the late actor's personal history. Both stories have sparked buzz, highlighting how deeply personal moments continue to unfold in the public eye of Indian cinema.

Raashii Khanna Cheers for Raid 2



Actress Raashii Khanna has joined the growing excitement surrounding Raid 2, starring Ajay Devgn, Vaani Kapoor, and Riteish Deshmukh. After the gripping trailer dropped on April 4, Raashii took to Instagram to share her reaction, calling it "intense and fierce" and added she's "looking forward" to watching it. Directed by Raj Kumar Gupta, Raid 2 is all set to release on May 1 and continues the legacy of its successful predecessor. With powerful visuals and a taut storyline, the film is already generating major buzz. Raashii, who recently starred in The Sabarmati Report, also tagged the lead actors in her post, giving a shoutout to the team as anticipation builds for the action-packed drama.

Urvashi Rautela just set the style bar sky-high as the stunning cover girl of Masala Magazine. Ditching filters for fierce realness, she rocked a glittering golden low-neck gown that shimmered with every move. Adding to the glam was a bold thigh-high slit, a sleek silver necklace, and a voluminous curly high bun that channeled retro diva energy with a chic modern twist. Her look was a perfect mix of elegance, edge, and full-on drama—turning heads and stealing spotlights effortlessly. With this sizzling photo-shoot, Urvashi proves once again that she doesn't just follow trends—she creates moments.

Urvashi Rautela's Golden Glam Bomb

