

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

t°

H 33° C

L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

t°

H 35° C

L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

t°

H 36° C

L 26° C

CM Siddaramaiah Calls Revenue Dept ‘Mother of Govt’ at National Survey Day Event



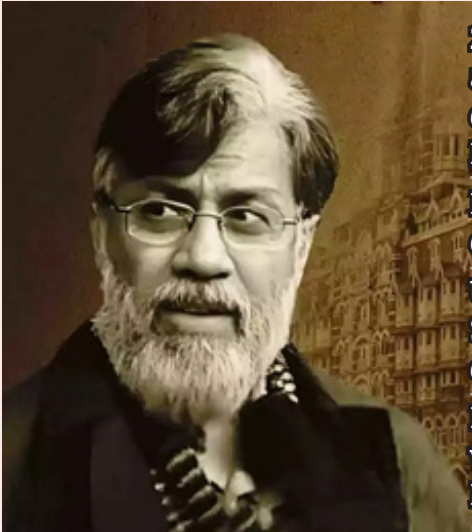
- CM praises Revenue Dept’s work under Krishna Byre Gowda at 36th National Survey Day function
- Transparent recruitment of surveyors; appointment letters to be issued soon
- Emphasis on encroachment-free villages and completing podi survey for farmers’ welfare



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday hailed the Revenue Department as the “mother department” of the government while inaugurating the 36th National Survey Day in front of the Vidhana Soudha. The program was organized by the Department of Survey, Revenue System and Land Records and the department’s employees’ associations. MLA Rizwan Arshad presided over the function, which was attended by Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, CM’s Political Secretary Nasir Ahmed, Chief Whip Ashok Patan, and several other dignitaries. In his address, Siddaramaiah said that if the Revenue Department functions properly, the farming

community will remain happy. He lauded Minister Krishna Byre Gowda’s leadership, calling him a competent minister “with statistics on the tip of his tongue” and praised his commitment to both expertise and care in governance. The CM emphasized the transparent recruitment of all vacant surveyor posts and announced that appointment letters would be issued shortly. He also expressed satisfaction over the honest functioning of Tahsildar and Assistant Commissioner offices, though he acknowledged that not all departmental issues have been resolved yet. Siddaramaiah assured continued financial and staffing support to the Revenue Department. He mentioned plans to consider making

licensed land surveyors permanent and confirmed that 36 Assistant Directors of Land Records (ADLRs) will be appointed soon. Highlighting the importance of land surveys, Siddaramaiah said, “Ours is a country of villages and farmers. If they are to produce in peace, survey work must be completed sincerely.” He stressed the need to remove encroachments on lake beds and make villages podi-free. Calling land survey work a “virtuous act,” Siddaramaiah instructed that National Survey Day be celebrated every year to recognize the department’s efforts. The event reaffirmed the state’s focus on land records, rural development, and fair governance in the survey and revenue sector.



26/11 Mumbai attacks accused Tahawwur Rana extradited from the US to India
NIA says years of sustained efforts led to the extradition
US courts, including Supreme Court, rejected all of Rana’s appeals
Rana accused of conspiring with David Headley and Pakistan-based terror groups

NIA’s First Statement After Tahawwur Rana Extradition

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Tahawwur Hussain Rana, one of the key conspirators in the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, has been extradited to India from the United States and landed in Delhi on Wednesday. This marks a major development in India’s pursuit of justice for the victims of the deadly attacks that killed 166 people and injured over 238. The National Investigation Agency (NIA), in its first official statement after the extradition, said that Rana’s return to India is the result of “sustained and concerted efforts to bring the key conspirator behind the 2008 mayhem to justice.” Rana, who was held in judicial custody in the US, had faced extradition proceedings initiated under the India-US Extradition Treaty. The process reached its final stage after the US District Court for the Central District of California ordered his extradition on May 16, 2023. Following the ruling, Rana filed multiple appeals—including in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, the US Supreme Court, and various peti-

tions such as writs of certiorari and habeas corpus—all of which were dismissed. With full cooperation from the US Department of Justice, the extradition process culminated in Rana being flown to India on a special aircraft. The NIA, along with Indian intelligence agencies, the National Security Guard (NSG), Ministry of External Affairs, and Ministry of Home Affairs, worked in tandem to bring him back. Rana is accused of collaborating with David Coleman Headley alias Daood Gilani, as well as Pakistan-based terror groups including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islami (HUJI), in orchestrating the 26/11 attacks. The attacks targeted prominent locations in Mumbai including the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, and Nariman House. This extradition is considered a critical breakthrough in India’s ongoing efforts to bring all perpetrators of the 26/11 attacks to justice.

Dy CM DKS Slams Centre Over Fuel Prices, Announces Congress Protest on April 17th

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC President DK Shivakumar on Thursday announced that the state Congress will hold a protest on April 17 against the BJP-led Central Government’s failure to control inflation and fuel prices. Speaking at a media conference held at the KPCC office, he condemned the Centre for imposing excessive taxes and accused it of burdening the common man. DK Shivakumar criticized the BJP’s ongoing ‘Janakrosha Yatra’ in the state, stating that it was ironically a protest against their own central leadership. “The BJP has no grounds to protest against our state government. We are supporting the people through five guarantees and have allocated ₹52,000 crore in the budget for their welfare,” he said. Highlighting the recent drop in global crude oil prices by 4.3%, Shivakumar questioned why the Centre had not

Congress to stage state-wide protest against BJP-led Centre over price hikes
DK Shivakumar accuses Centre of looting public through high fuel taxes
Justifies milk price hike to support farmers amid national inflation



passed on the benefit to consumers. “The base price of petrol is ₹42.60, but it is being sold at ₹103. The Centre is making a profit of ₹60 per litre and imposing nearly 60% tax. The profit on diesel is ₹43. They have looted ₹43 lakh crore in the name of fuel taxes,” he alleged. He further urged the BJP to carry placards reading “Yatra against Central Government” since their policies are hurting every section of society. Justifying the state’s recent hike in milk prices, Shivakumar said it was a move to support dairy farmers. “We are paying ₹42 per litre to farmers, while in states like Telangana, Assam, and Punjab, the prices range between ₹52 and ₹60. We want to save our farmers, which is why we revised the price,” he explained. Shivakumar also questioned the Centre’s inaction on controlling the prices of cattle

125% slapped on China, 10% for others with a 90-day pause
US targets Beijing alone as allies show restraint, markets cheer reversal
US imposes 125% tariff on all Chinese goods, effective immediately
90-day pause on reciprocal tariffs for 75 other nations
Wall Street surges as Trump softens stance on allies

Trump to China: Tariff-ied and Isolated



TPN Correspondent | Washington
In a dramatic policy pivot, former US President Donald Trump has announced a steep 125% tariff on all Chinese imports, isolating Beijing from the rest of the world while pausing tariffs on 75 other nations for 90 days. The announcement, made via his social media platform Truth Social, marks a sharp escalation in

Trump’s ongoing trade confrontation with China and a rollback of earlier punitive duties on other countries. “Based on the lack of respect that China has shown to the World’s Markets, I am hereby raising the Tariff charged to China by the United States of America to 125%, effective immediately,” Trump

wrote, adding that the US will no longer tolerate what he called “decades of robbery and currency manipulation.” Trump’s move follows a backlash from global partners after his April 2 “Liberation Day” tariff announcement, which

Karnataka Cabinet to Finally Discuss Long-Pending Caste Census Report on Friday



- **Report submitted in 2023 by Backward Classes Commission to be opened after year-long delay**
- **Congress aims to strengthen OBC outreach ahead of elections, amid Rahul Gandhi's pro-OBC push**
- **Possible backlash expected from Lingayat, Vokkaliga communities over reservation concerns**

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
After years of delay and political apprehension, the Karnataka cabinet will finally take up the contentious Socioeconomic and Education Survey report—commonly referred to as the state's caste census—in its meeting scheduled for Friday. The development marks a major turning point in the state's reservation discourse and could reshape Karnataka's political landscape ahead of upcoming elections. The report, prepared by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, was submitted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in 2023, but has since remained sealed and unaddressed, despite mounting demands for transparency. Sources told The Indian Express that both the Chief Minister's Office and the Law Department have now cleared it for cabinet-level deliberation. Originally commissioned in 2015 during Siddaramaiah's earlier tenure,

the survey was completed by 2017. However, its findings were shelved ahead of the 2018 Assembly elections over fears of political backlash. Successive governments—led by H D Kumaraswamy, B S Yediyurappa, and Basavaraj Bommai—also chose not to act on the report. The Congress's move to revisit the caste census is seen as part of a broader national strategy to consolidate Other Backward Classes (OBC) support. At a recent Congress Working Committee meeting in Ahmedabad, Rahul Gandhi reportedly urged all state units to prioritise OBC welfare and visibility, signalling a shift in the party's electoral approach. However, the decision could spark strong resistance from dominant caste groups like the Lingayats and Vokkaligas, who have previously voiced concerns over the survey's implications for the state's reservation structure and political balance. With Karnataka's caste dynamics historically influencing policy and politics, Friday's cabinet discussion will be closely watched by both proponents and opponents of the caste census. A decision to make the report public or act on its recommendations could trigger significant realignments in the state's social and political equations.

Tumkur Railway Station May Be Named After Shivakumar Swamiji - HM Parameshwara

- **Home Minister G. Parameshwara confirms receipt of proposal**
- **Will consult CM Siddaramaiah before issuing final order**
- **Union Minister Soman-na also secured Centre's approval**

TPN Correspondent | Tumkur

Karnataka Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwara announced on Thursday that the state government has received a formal proposal to rename the Tumkur railway station after the late Siddaganga seer, Dr. Shivakumara Swamiji. He stated that the matter will be taken up with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the government will proceed with issuing the official order after consultation. Dr. Parameshwara visited



Siddaganga Mutt on Thursday and received the blessings of Siddalinga Swamiji. Speaking to reporters afterward, he said naming the railway station after Shivakumar Swamiji would be a fitting and permanent tribute to the seer's extraordinary contributions to education, social service, and spirituality. He made it clear that the government does not intend to delay the process and will act swiftly

upon securing the Chief Minister's nod. He also mentioned that Union Minister V. Soman-na has already taken steps at the central level. According to Parameshwara, the Union government has approved the proposal to name the station after the spiritual leader, which clears a major hurdle in the renaming process. The late Shivakumar Swamiji, fondly known as the

'Walking God,' is revered across Karnataka and beyond for his decades-long service in establishing educational institutions and supporting lakhs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The proposal to name the Tumkur railway station after him has received widespread public and political support, with calls growing louder over the past few months. Parameshwara concluded by assuring that both the state and central governments are on the same page, and once the internal discussions are complete, an official announcement will follow. The move is seen as a long-awaited recognition of the seer's legacy, particularly in the Tumkur region where his influence remains deeply rooted.

Karnataka Govt Launches Unified Cyber Command to Combat Digital Threats

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a landmark move to bolster digital security, the Karnataka government has launched a Unified Cyber Command, centralizing all operations related to cybercrime, cybersecurity, misinformation, and disinformation under one authority. The command will be headed by a Director General of Police (DGP) and is expected to revolutionize the way the state tackles rising cyber threats. The formal order establishing the Cyber Command was issued on April 9, signaling a major restructuring of Karnataka's cyber governance architecture. The decision comes against the backdrop of disturbing data — over 52,000 cybercrime cases



have been registered in the state in the last four years, the highest in southern India. Notably, Bengaluru alone accounts for nearly 20% of all cybercrimes in Indian megacities. Until now, cyber responsibilities were split across the Karnataka State Police and the E-Governance De-

partment, often leading to coordination gaps and inefficient responses. The new command structure places a senior police official at the helm, ensuring faster investigations, better inter-agency coordination, and proactive action against evolving digital threats. This strategic pivot also

marks a decline in the administrative control of the E-Governance Department, replacing it with a security-led model more suited to tackle complex cyber incidents. Experts say this unified framework will enable quicker response times, improved integration of technology, and heightened accountability. The Cyber Command will collaborate with central agencies and private tech companies, creating a resilient ecosystem that can adapt to the fast-changing tactics of cybercriminals. With this initiative, Karnataka positions itself as a pioneer in cyber governance, potentially offering a replicable model for other states across India.

1st Page Cont..

Trump to China: Tariff-ied and Isolated

imposed duties on countries that maintained levies on US goods. While the initial move alienated key allies, Wednesday's announcement appears to aim at damage control — extending an olive branch to cooperative nations and zeroing in on China as the primary adversary. In his post, Trump praised the 75 nations that refrained from retaliation and engaged in negotiations with US officials. "More than 75 countries have called representatives of the United States to negotiate solutions. They respected my strong suggestions and did not retaliate," he said, noting that these countries will now face a reduced 10% tariff during the 90-day review period. The US stock markets responded positively to the announcement. The S&P 500 surged 6% to 5,281.44,

snapping a week-long losing streak triggered by the original reciprocal tariff rollout. Trump's latest move aims to realign global sentiment, which had started shifting toward China amid rising tensions with Washington. Analysts believe the tariff pause on most countries could now reverse that trend, pushing nations back into closer trade alignment with the US and isolating Beijing further. As the world's two largest economies lock horns again, all eyes will be on how China's leadership responds, particularly President Xi Jinping, who has so far matched Trump's aggression in trade matters. But with allies now back in Washington's corner, Beijing may find itself more cornered than before.

Dy CM DKS Slams Centre Over Fuel Prices, Announces Congress Protest on April 17th

feed and essential goods like Busa and Indi. "While the Centre increases all prices, they shift blame to the states. This is unacceptable," he said.

The Congress protest on April 17 is expected to intensify the political tussle over inflation and fuel pricing in the lead-up to the elections.

Karnataka HC Directs KPSC to Let Pregnant Woman Write Exam from Hometown

TPN Correspondent | Kalaburagi

In a strong endorsement of equitable access to public employment, the Karnataka High Court has directed the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) to facilitate a pregnant woman's request to write her upcoming Group A recruitment exams in her hometown of Kalaburagi. The woman, in an advanced stage of pregnancy, had approached the court after being assigned examination centres in Bengaluru and Dharwad. Justice Dr. Chillakur Sumalatha, in her order passed on April 4, emphasized the state's constitutional obligation to ensure equal opportunity, especially when it comes to accommodating deserving candidates with genuine constraints. The order was made public this week. The petitioner, undergoing treatment and under strict medical supervision, was advised against long-distance travel, making her assigned centres both risky and unreasonable. Her counsel highlighted the unfair burden such a directive placed on a woman in her condition. The KPSC opposed the plea, citing logistical difficulties and the need for CCTV surveillance



and uniformity in exam procedures. However, the court dismissed these arguments, stating that the right to equality (Article 14), special protection for women (Article 15), and equal opportunity in public employment (Article 16) outweigh such administrative excuses. In a scathing remark, the court questioned the state's financial priorities, noting: "Our country is spending crores of rupees for conducting elections and bye-elections... But, here is a case where the State submits that it cannot spend money to conduct examinations for a deserving candidate." The judgment is being viewed as a landmark affirmation of reasonable accommodation, particularly for women during pregnancy, within the framework of state examinations and public employment rights. Following the court's direction, the KPSC is expected to make arrangements to enable the petitioner to appear for the April 15-19 exams from Kalaburagi.

Baldota Group Enters Steel Sector with ₹54,000-Cr Plant in Karnataka

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Karnataka-based Baldota Group, known for its presence in renewable energy, mining, shipping, and industrial gases, has announced a major foray into the steel industry with a massive ₹54,000 crore investment to establish a 10.5 million tonne (MT) capacity steel plant in the state. Once operational, the greenfield project will become Karnataka's second-largest steel plant, generating lakhs of direct and indirect jobs, according to Nagaraj N B, Vice President of the Integrated Steel Project. The group confirmed that environmental clearance has been obtained from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) for the first 3.5 MT phase, following a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Construction for the initial phase is set to begin this year. The remaining 7 MT of capacity will be added in phases by 2030, aligning with the central government's vision of increasing India's steel-making capacity to 300 MT. India currently stands at 180 MT, and Baldota aims to contribute 10.5 MT towards the national target. Highlighting sustainability, the proposed steel plant will integrate 295 MW of captive power generation from waste gases and fuels, promoting resource efficiency and reducing emissions. In response to concerns raised by certain sections of civil society over the project's environmental impact, Baldota Group released its EIA report, which details pollution control, waste management, and ecological safeguards planned during the design stage. With this bold move, Baldota not only diversifies its industrial portfolio but also positions itself as a significant player in India's steel manufacturing landscape, while addressing environmental responsibilities.

MP PC Mohan Questions BBMP Over Bengaluru Tunnel Road Project

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru Central MP PC Mohan has voiced strong opposition to the controversial 18-km tunnel road project proposed by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), questioning both its public support and financial prudence. In a social media post, he demanded clarity on whether the project would be scrapped if the majority of citizens reject it in the ongoing BBMP opinion survey.

“BBMP says they’ll incorporate public comments on tunnel roads. Citizens of Bengaluru have suggested dropping the project. If BBMP is sincere, then the project should be dropped, right? Who’s accountable for the ₹14.2 crore spent on the DPR?” Mohan asked.

The ₹8,043 crore tunnel road project, which aims to connect Hebbal and Silk Board Junction, has faced mounting criticism since its announcement. Earlier this year, civic groups urged BBMP to conduct a thorough public consultation, citing concerns over urban planning, cost-effectiveness, and ecological impact.

Further intensifying the debate, Mohan revealed glaring mistakes in the Detailed Project Report



(DPR) prepared by Rodic Consultancy Pvt. Ltd., including erroneous references to cities like Nashik and Malegaon instead of Bengaluru, and unrelated projects such as Mumbai’s Coastal Road. He termed the report a “cut-and-paste” job and questioned how it was completed in just three months, stating that a quality DPR should take 12 to 18 months with proper geotechnical surveys.

In a letter to BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath, the MP criticized the DPR’s quality and the BBMP’s haste in pushing forward the proposal without due diligence.

Instead of expensive tunnel infrastructure, Mohan reiterated the need to focus on public transport, including the expansion of Namma Metro and strengthening BMTC’s bus network, to address Bengaluru’s mobility challenges. “This tunnel project will not solve the traffic crisis. It will make it worse,” he asserted.

BJP’s R Ashoka Slams Congress Govt, Cites ‘Janaakrosha’ as Proof of Administrative Collapse



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Leader of the Opposition in Karnataka, R Ashoka, launched a sharp attack on the Siddaramaiah-led Congress government, declaring that the ongoing ‘Janaakrosha Yatra’ across the state clearly shows a “collapse of administration” and the “limitless corruption” prevailing under the current regime. He referred to public participation and sentiment during the Yatra as evidence of widespread discontent.

Addressing media on Thursday, Ashoka cited controversial remarks by the Chief Minister’s economic advisor Basavaraj Rayareddy, who said Karnataka ranks highest in corruption, and Minister D Sudhakar, who admitted that the government was only now taking off after 20 months. Ashoka said, “These are certificates of failure from within their own ranks.”

The 16-day Janaakrosha Yatra, launched by the BJP on Monday, is being carried out across all districts to protest against the Congress government’s policies, including skyrocketing prices, alleged appeasement politics, and fund diversion meant for Dalit welfare.

Ashoka alleged that the ₹ guarantee schemes were unscientifically implemented, leading to an empty treasury and zero new development initiatives. He also questioned the commitment of ministers who, he claimed, rarely step out of Bengaluru and face public wrath when they do. “Even ‘Janaata Darshan’ events ordered by the CM have been ignored by ministers,” he added.

Further, he alleged that the administration has effectively shifted to Wayanad, linking recent decisions such as the permission for a Malayalam film shoot in Himavad Gopalaswamy Hills, a protected forest area, to influence from Priyanka Gandhi’s Lok Sabha constituency.

Ashoka demanded a clarification from the government on who granted the film clearance, quoting a local forest official who stated permission was given at the “government level.”

He concluded by questioning Siddaramaiah’s political future, suggesting internal speculation of a leadership change is further destabilizing governance, with officials avoiding duties and public grievances going unheard.

Modi Government Stands with Dalits, Says BY Vijayendra

- Thousands participate in BJP’s Janakrosha Yatra in Udupi
- PM Modi’s leadership hailed as protective of Dalit rights
- Congress accused of symbolic respect to Ambedkar



TPN Correspondent | Udupi

BJP Karnataka State President BY Vijayendra declared on Thursday that the Narendra Modi-led government is genuinely committed to the welfare and upliftment of Dalits across the nation. He made these remarks while addressing the media during the BJP’s ongoing Janakrosha Yatra in Udupi, where thousands of party workers participated enthusiastically.

Vijayendra criticized Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul

Gandhi, stating that although they hold the Constitution in their hands, the people of India are well aware of how much genuine respect they have for its architect, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He said that their actions do not match the symbolic gestures they often make in public.

Reiterating the BJP’s commitment to social justice, Vijayendra said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ensured Dalits are not only protected but also empowered under his leadership. “This government is not about to-

kenism; it is about transformation. Modi Ji has implemented schemes that directly benefit the Dalit community, providing education, housing, employment, and safety,” he asserted. The Janakrosha Yatra in Udupi is part of the BJP’s statewide campaign to expose what the party terms as the failures and duplicity of the Congress government

in Karnataka. Vijayendra noted that people from all walks of life, especially from the marginalized sections, are increasingly realizing that the BJP is the only party committed to inclusive development and justice.

He also emphasized that the BJP has always stood by the principles of Dr. Ambedkar in action, not just in speeches. “We

do not need to flaunt the Constitution to prove our commitment—we live by its values every day,” Vijayendra said, drawing applause from the party cadre. The Janakrosha Yatra will continue across several districts in the coming days, with senior BJP leaders addressing public grievances and rallying support ahead of the upcoming elections.

JDS Launches ‘Saakappa Saaku’ Campaign Against Congress Govt in Karnataka

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Janata Dal (Secular) launched a new state-wide protest campaign titled ‘Saakappa Saaku, Congress Sarkaara’ (Enough is Enough, Congress Government), intensifying its attack on the ruling Congress in Karnataka. The campaign, spearheaded by JDS Youth Wing President Nikhil Kumaraswamy, aims to highlight what the party calls “the misdeeds and financial mismanagement” of the Congress-led state government.

Speaking to media persons in Bengaluru, Nikhil alleged that the Congress government has pushed Karnataka into an economic crisis and accused



it of bringing the state to the brink of a financial emergency. “They are continuously exploiting the people. How much longer should we tolerate this? That’s why we are launching this fight against the corrupt Congress government,” Nikhil stated.

As part of the initiative, Nikhil launched the

campaign website www.saakappasaaku.com, inviting not just JDS workers but all citizens of Karnataka to register and participate in the protest movement. The site lists what JDS terms as the Congress government’s “failures and burden on the public.”

The campaign comes even as the Bharatiya Ja-

- JDS accuses Congress of driving Karnataka into a financial emergency
- State-wide protest announced, to be led by Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy
- Campaign website launched to mobilize public participation

nata Party (BJP), the JDS’ electoral ally, continues its own Janakrosha Yatra protesting recent price hikes in the state. Although both parties are coordinating at the central level, signs of differing campaign strategies are evident on the ground.

As a major part of the protest plan, the JDS will organize a public demon-

stration at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Saturday, led by Union Minister and senior party leader HD Kumaraswamy. The event is expected to draw large participation from JDS cadres and supporters across Karnataka, as the party positions itself as a strong regional voice ahead of the upcoming elections.

Environmentalists, Farmers, and Religious Leaders Unite Against Kalasa-Banduri Project

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

Prominent environmentalists, farmers, and religious leaders from Karnataka and Goa gathered in Khanapur to voice strong opposition to the Kalasa-Banduri water diversion project, warning that the plan poses a grave threat to the Mahadayi basin and surrounding ecosystems.

The protest meeting, held under the banner ‘Save Mhadei, Save Malaprabha, Save Khanapur Taluka, Save Rains’, was marked by fiery speeches and resolutions to intensify resistance to the Karnataka government’s push to acquire land for the project. Protesters accused the government of reviving a shelved diversion plan without proper environmental clearances, and in blatant disregard of ecological sensitivities in the Western Ghats region.

Veteran environmentalist Dilip Kamat warned that diverting tributaries like Kalsa and Bhandura to the Malaprabha River



would trigger desertification in North Karnataka, submerge forests, and disrupt rainfall. “Implementing this project would devastate villages and wildlife sanctuaries across the Western Ghats. The damage to Bhimgad and Mhadei sanctuaries would be irreversible,” he said.

Captain Nitin Dhond, a noted eco-activist, challenged claims that Mhadei waters were being wasted by flowing into the sea. “This narrative is scientifically flawed. Leading institutes like IISc and the Norwegian Institute for Water Research have warned against such diversions,” he said, adding that deforestation and

unplanned development are turning North Karnataka arid.

Farmers like Kallappa Ghadi, who have received land acquisition notices, vowed to fight back, stating that many gram panchayats, including Karambol, have passed resolutions opposing the project. Activist Sujit Mulgund declared, “We will resist this on legal, social, and political fronts. No land acquisition. No dams. No surrender.”

A memorandum outlining their objections will be submitted to the Deputy Commissioner of Belagavi, urging authorities to halt the project and protect the Mahadayi basin for future generations.

Ballari MLA B Nagendra, Two Others Convicted in Cheque Bounce Case

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The 42nd Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) court in Bengaluru convicted Ballari MLA and former minister B Nagendra, along with his associates Anil Rajashekhar and Chundur Bhaskar, in a cheque bounce case filed by VSL Steels Limited. The trio has been ordered to pay a fine of ₹1.25 crore, failing which they will each face one year of imprisonment. The case traces back to a prolonged financial dispute dating to 2013 between VSL Steels and the three individuals, who are partners in BC Infrastructure and Resources. As part of a legal settlement, the firm issued a cheque for ₹1 crore in 2022, which later bounced, prompting VSL Steels to initiate legal proceedings under the Negotiable Instruments



Act. Presiding Judge K N Shivakumar, who heads the special court for cases involving sitting and former legislators, delivered the judgment after examining the evidence and ruled in favour of the complainant. The total dues owed by the firm amounted to ₹2.53 crore, of which the bounced cheque was a partial payment. B Nagendra is already under scrutiny in the Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation scam, where he has been named as one of the accused. This conviction adds to his growing legal troubles and could have further political and legal implications.

Floating Gardens to Beautify Lalbagh Lake

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In an effort to rejuvenate the iconic Lalbagh lake in Bengaluru, the Karnataka Horticulture Department has begun work on installing floating gardens to improve both the water quality and the lake's visual appeal. The department has partnered with an external agency to install 22 floating gardens, each built on PVC-pipe bases, strategically placed along the periphery of the 30-acre lake. So far, nearly 80% of the frames have been set up, and officials have announced a 25-day deadline to complete the rest of

the work, which includes finalizing the structures, planting saplings, and releasing the completed gardens into the water.

The floating platforms are being constructed in two sizes—12 by 15 feet and 6 by 4 feet—and each will hold between 70 and 300 saplings of Canna Indica, a plant chosen for its cost-effectiveness, water-friendly nature, and ability to bloom throughout the year.

According to M Jagadeesh, Joint Director of Horticulture (Parks and Gardens), Lalbagh, Canna Indica is especially suitable because its roots absorb nutrients directly

from the water once submerged, playing a crucial role in natural water purification. The initiative, entirely funded by the implementing agency, is expected to not only clean the lake but also add to its beauty with floating gardens featuring differently coloured plants.

These colourful arrangements will help suppress algal growth and attract native bird species such as waterhens, contributing to biodiversity around the lake. Jagadeesh added that the saplings are expected to take around three to four months to grow into a lush, bushy state, at which

point flowering will begin, transforming the lake into a vibrant and ecologically balanced space. This innovative project blends sus-

tainability with aesthetics and is likely to become a model for urban lake restoration in other cities as well.



Sira Airport May Not Be Viable

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Despite growing political support for an international airport at Sira in Karnataka's Tumakuru district, State Infrastructure Minister M B Patil has indicated that the proposal may not be viable as a second international airport for Bengaluru.

While Home Minister G Parameshwara and several legislators across party lines have endorsed the idea, Patil clarified that if the airport were established in Sira — located about 120 km from Bengaluru — it would more likely serve as a district or regional airport rather than an international one linked to the state capital. The campaign for the Sira airport has been led by senior Congress leader and MLA T B Jayachandra, and has received backing from Union Minister of State and Tumakuru MP V Somanna.

However, the state government has already identified and evaluated three alternative locations for Bengaluru's second airport: two on Kanakapura Road near Harohalli and one on Kunigal Road in Nelamangala. These sites have recently been inspected by a team from

the Airports Authority of India (AAI). Patil, while acknowledging Jayachandra's seniority and contribution to the campaign, emphasized that an international airport must be strategically positioned to serve Bengaluru efficiently. In his view, Sira's distance and location make it more suitable for addressing the air travel needs of Tumakuru and Chitradurga districts rather than functioning as a viable international gateway for Bengaluru.

This distinction is critical, as the demand for a second international airport stems from the need to reduce congestion at Kempegowda International Airport and support Bengaluru's expanding aviation and logistics infrastructure.

With expert evaluations already underway at the shortlisted sites and the AAI involved in technical assessments, the state government appears to be leaning towards locations closer to Bengaluru's existing urban sprawl. As deliberations continue, the Sira proposal may still find merit as a regional hub, but is unlikely to take off as the state capital's next international air terminal.

Tipping Turns Costly for Auto Rides

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru's auto rickshaw commuters are feeling the pinch as tipping becomes a norm before even securing a ride, turning daily travel into a costly and frustrating experience. Ride-hailing apps now encourage users to add tips upfront—often before searching for available drivers—promising quicker matches, especially during peak hours. However, commuters report that even with rising tip amounts, from Rs 30 up to Rs 50 on busy routes, wait times remain long, sometimes even during off-peak hours.

Rijul Ballal, a city-based psychologist, noted that the system used to check for autos first before asking for a tip if no one accepted the ride, but now it prompts users to tip in advance, making it harder to book without one. Swathi B, a chartered accountant commuting between Race Course Road and Malleswaram, shared that despite offering tips of Rs 10–20, she faces cancellations and delays, particularly in the mornings. Ride aggregators have remained silent on the issue, offering no response to queries.

In May 2024, the Karnataka High Court dis-



missed petitions by these platforms that attempted to challenge a 2022 government notification capping app-based auto fares to no more than 5% above regulated rates. With di-

rect fare hikes restricted, the apps appear to be using tips as a workaround. Mobility expert Sathya Arikutharam criticized this “tips before trips” model, saying it obscures

real-time availability by withholding location data from both drivers and users, manufacturing a sense of scarcity and nudging passengers toward tipping more.

Manjunath, president of the Adarsh Auto Union, confirmed that many drivers now prefer accepting only high-incentive rides, leading to selective service and further inconvenience. As this opaque tipping model becomes standard practice, commuters are left to navigate not just traffic, but also unpredictable pricing and availability, all while paying extra just to get moving.

BWSSB Hikes Water Tariffs After 11 Years

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

After more than a decade, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has officially announced a water tariff hike, marking the first such revision in 11 years.

The change, aimed at addressing the utility's rising financial burden, will take effect from the next billing cycle and is set to be formally notified on April 10. BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasath Manohar emphasized that the revision was designed to manage operational costs without imposing a heavy burden on the public.

Currently, BWSSB incurs a monthly expenditure of around ₹200 crore, while revenue collection remains at just ₹130 crore,



leading to a significant monthly deficit of ₹70 crore. Under the new system, domestic users will be charged on a slab basis, beginning at 0.15 paise per litre for usage up to 8,000

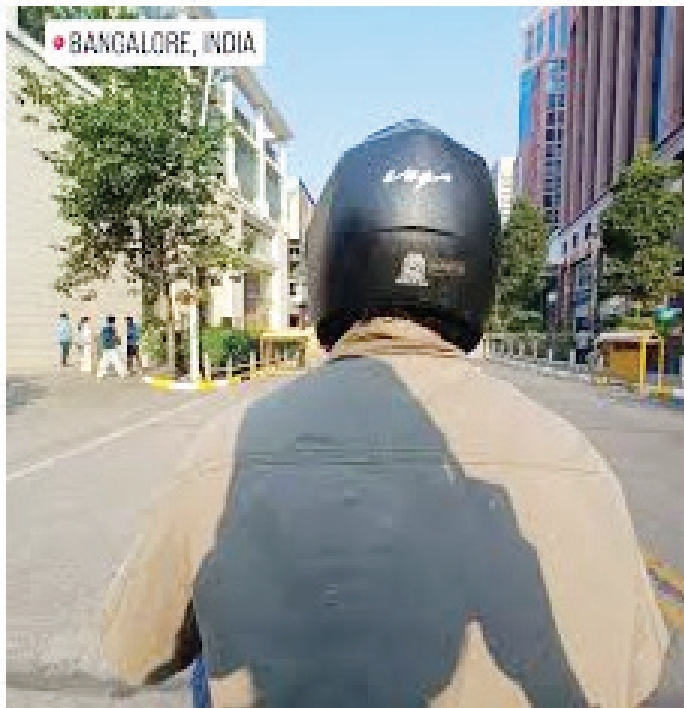
litres and reaching 1 paise per litre for consumption exceeding 1 lakh litres. A similar tiered structure is being applied to high-rise (domestic-HR) users, replacing the earlier flat

bulk rate.

In this category, users consuming up to 2 lakh litres will pay 0.30 paise per litre, with charges gradually increasing to 1 paise per litre for higher

usage. In addition to this, sanitary charges for water drawn from borewells and public sources have also seen a hike — ₹30 more for domestic users and ₹125 more for non-domestic consumers. The move follows years of financial strain and increasing infrastructure costs for the board, especially in the face of Bengaluru's rapidly expanding population and growing water demands.

Officials hope this new pricing structure will not only help in bridging the revenue gap, but also promote judicious water usage among consumers. While BWSSB assures that the impact on the average household will be minimal, the long-overdue hike signals a shift toward sustainable water management in the city.



Infosys Employee Moonlights as Bike Taxi Rider

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a surprising and inspiring incident from Bengaluru, an Infosys employee has been making waves online after being spotted working as a bike taxi rider during his free time. The story came to light through a LinkedIn post by Chaarmikha Nagalla, who shared her unexpected encounter with the rider. Chaarmikha

wrote that she had booked a bike taxi to navigate Bengaluru's notorious traffic and reach her workplace faster. Upon arrival, the rider called her with a professional “Am I audible?” — a line commonly heard in corporate meetings. Amused by the formal tone, she struck up a conversation and discovered that her rider worked full-time at Infosys in the contract management de-

partment.

What surprised her — and later, netizens — was the reason he gave for picking up this gig. Instead of spending his weekends and early mornings doom-scrolling through social media, he decided to be productive and earn some extra income.

“It was his first day,” Chaarmikha noted. “He said he wanted to try

something different with his time instead of endlessly scrolling through reels. It made me reflect on how many of us lose hours to screens without even realizing it.”

Her post quickly gained traction, drawing admiration and praise for the employee's work ethic and time management. Many users lauded his initiative, calling it a refreshing example of hustle and in-

tentional living in an age of digital distraction.

This story also sparked broader discussions on social media about moonlighting, the gig economy, and how professionals are redefining productivity. While some raised concerns about burnout and work-life balance, most appreciated the proactive approach the Infosys employee took to utilize his time more meaningfully.

Heatwave Hits North India Early

TPN Correspondent | Haryana

Summer has made an early and intense entry into northern India, with Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh experiencing soaring temperatures in the first week of April—well ahead of the usual seasonal trend. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), this year is projected to be hotter than the last, and signs of that are already visible, with Chandigarh recording higher-than-usual temperatures for early April. Senior Meteorol-

ogist Surendra Pal from the Chandigarh Meteorological Center noted that last year such heat was felt only after April 15, but this year, the mercury has risen unusually early. Although a brief period of pleasant weather may offer some temporary relief, heatwave conditions are likely to dominate the region soon. The IMD has forecast a heatwave in Haryana, Punjab, and Rajasthan, with partly cloudy skies and possible rain, thunderstorms, or duststorms in Rajasthan on April 11 and 12, and sim-

ilar conditions expected in Punjab and Haryana over the next few days. Despite the presence of a Western Disturbance, experts warn it won't be enough to counter the rising heat. Authorities have issued a public advisory urging people to stay indoors unless necessary, remain well-hydrated, wear light and loose-fitting clothes, and minimize direct exposure to the sun. The elderly, children, and those with health conditions are advised to take extra precautions during this period. Light rainfall is ex-

pected in parts of Haryana on April 10 and 11, while Punjab may see similar scattered weather activity from April 10 to 13, though these are not likely to bring lasting relief. With temperatures already peaking unusually high, the IMD has stressed the importance of community awareness and personal safety to prevent heat-related illnesses. The sudden temperature spike highlights growing concerns over shifting weather patterns and the broader impact of climate change on regional climates.



ED Arrests Ex-Bank Chief in Fraud



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

In a significant development, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday arrested R M Manjunatha Gowda, the former chairman of the Shimoga District Co-operative Central Bank, in connection with an alleged ₹63 crore financial fraud. The arrest was made under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), a day after the ED conducted raids at various locations in Bengaluru and Shivamogga districts of Karnataka as part of its investigation into irregularities at the bank's City Branch. Following his arrest, Gowda was produced before a special court in Bengaluru, which ordered a 14-day ED custody. According to the federal agency, the large-scale misappropriation of funds at the City Branch was primarily executed by the branch manager, B Shobha, allegedly under Gowda's directions. The ED stated that the fraudulent activities involved systematic financial manipulation and serious breaches of banking pro-

ocols. The agency further noted that the scale of the irregularities pointed to a deeper nexus and misuse of authority at senior levels within the bank. While neither Gowda nor Shobha, nor their legal representatives, could be reached for a response to the allegations, the ED maintained that the evidence gathered during searches included crucial documents and digital records that substantiated their claims. The agency's investigation is ongoing, and more arrests could follow as the probe unfolds. This case has stirred political and financial circles in Karnataka, as co-operative banks play a significant role in rural credit and local financial ecosystems. The ED's action underscores a broader crackdown on financial misgovernance and irregularities in the co-operative banking sector. As the investigation progresses, it is expected to cast a spotlight on internal audit failures and regulatory lapses that allowed such undetected fraud to take place over an extended period.

Bengaluru T2 Earns Skytrax Glory

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Kempegowda International Airport's Terminal 2 (T2) has made history by becoming the first terminal in India to receive the prestigious 5-Star Airport Terminal Rating from Skytrax, a globally recognized standard for airport quality and passenger experience.

This highly coveted recognition is the result of a detailed audit covering over 800 passenger touchpoints across more than 30 performance categories, including terminal design, cleanliness, comfort, security, digital integration, passenger facilities, hospitality, accessibility, and environmental sus-

tainability. Awarded only to the world's top-performing airports, the rating showcases T2's exceptional infrastructure and passenger-centric services that prioritize convenience, efficiency, and elegance. According to a press release issued by Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), this recognition is not just an accolade but a reflection of the airport's commitment to delivering a world-class, seamless, and inclusive travel experience.

BIAL's Managing Director and CEO, Hari Marar, expressed pride and gratitude, stating that such milestones are possible only due to the collective



trust and contributions of passengers, employees, and partners. He added that this award firmly places Bengaluru on the global aviation map and sets a new benchmark for Indian airports. Sky-

trax CEO Edward Plaisted echoed this sentiment, noting that BLR Airport's T2 now joins an elite group of top-rated terminals worldwide and has achieved the highest level of quality recognition in

the airport industry. The state-of-the-art terminal, known for its blend of modern technology and sustainable architecture, has been designed to enhance every phase of the travel journey.

The achievement also comes at a time when India is rapidly expanding its aviation footprint, and Bengaluru's T2 now stands as a model for future infrastructure developments in the country. With this global distinction, Terminal 2 not only enhances passenger confidence but also boosts the city's reputation as a leading gateway in South Asia, further strengthening its role in international travel and commerce.

Karnataka Leads Nation in EV Charging

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Karnataka has emerged as India's front-runner in electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure, boasting the highest number of public EV charging stations across the country. According to the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, the state now hosts 5,880 public charging points, with a significant majority—4,626 stations—located in tier-1 cities, predominantly in Bengaluru.

This development puts Karnataka far ahead of other major states like Maharashtra, which has 2,454 charging stations, and Delhi with 1,951, all of which have been established within the last five years. The remarkable



lead reflects Karnataka's aggressive push for clean mobility and its strategic policies aimed at encouraging EV adoption. Bengaluru, already known as India's tech capital, has become a hub for green mobility, thanks to robust

state support, increased public-private partnerships, and a rising number of EV users.

Charging centers, like the prominent one at Cubbon Park, symbolize the growing accessibility and ease of using electric ve-

hicles in the state. The government's continued efforts to reduce carbon emissions, attract EV manufacturing investments, and expand sustainable transport options have played a key role in this success.

Karnataka's EV infrastruc-

ture is not only facilitat-

ing convenient charging

for current users but also

boosting public confidence

in switching to electric

mobility. This positions

the state as a model for

other regions aiming to

build efficient, eco-friend-

ly transportation systems. As the demand for EVs continues to grow in India, Karnataka's forward-thinking approach, including city-specific infrastructure planning and incentives, is expected to further cement its leadership in the green mobility space.

The milestone of 5,880

charging stations not only

highlights technological

and infrastructural growth

but also signals the state's

long-term commitment to

fighting climate change and

reducing its dependence on

fossil fuels. With such strong

foundations in place, Karnataka

is set to play a pivotal role in

shaping the future of India's

electric vehicle ecosystem.

Kalaburagi Gears Up for IT Leap

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Kalaburagi is on track to emerge as Karnataka's next major IT hub, thanks to a strategic collaboration between the state government, the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), and PDA College of Engineering.

On April 9, a formal agreement was signed at the district administrative complex to establish a state-of-the-art incubation centre and a software development facility in the city. Spearheaded by Deputy Commission-



er Fouzia Taranum, the initiative is a significant step toward nurturing local entrepreneurship and

boosting the region's digital economy.

This development is part of the broader Lo-

cal Economy Accelerator Programme (LEAP), announced in the 2025 state budget, which includes a

substantial ₹1,000 crore allocation aimed at fostering innovation and generating five lakh job opportunities across Tier-II cities such as Kalaburagi, Hubballi-Dharwad, Mysuru, and Mangaluru. The planned incubation centre will serve as a launchpad for startups by offering mentorship, infrastructure, and technical support, while the Offshore Development Centre (ODC) will create a platform for software development and outsourcing opportunities.

Officials believe that

the combination of education, policy support, and public-private collaboration will position Kalaburagi as a competitive player in the state's growing tech landscape. The partnership with PDA College of Engineering, a leading academic institution in the region, ensures a steady talent pipeline and the integration of research and development with real-world applications. The initiative also reflects the state's commitment to decentralizing growth beyond Bengaluru and fostering inclusive

development by empowering smaller cities. By creating an ecosystem for startups and digital innovation, Kalaburagi is set to attract IT firms, investors, and young entrepreneurs. This move not only accelerates job creation and skill development in the region but also contributes to the larger goal of making Karnataka a digital-first economy. If executed effectively, Kalaburagi could soon stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the likes of Mysuru and Mangaluru as a vibrant tech destination.

Bangladesh's New Regime Must Tread Carefully

The evolving political landscape in Bangladesh following the ouster of Sheikh Hasina has led to a perceptible strain in India-Bangladesh relations, particularly in light of recent diplomatic exchanges. At the BIM-STECS summit in Bangkok on April 4, a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh's Interim Adviser stirred controversy, echoing past instances where bilateral talks at the level of foreign ministers and secretaries have been followed by Bangladeshi press briefings emphasizing contentious issues. These post-meeting statements often highlight Bangladeshi demands while downplaying or outright rejecting Indian concerns, fostering a narrative of Dhaka "standing up" to New Delhi. This approach appears to be aligned with the growing anti-India sentiment reportedly prevailing in parts of Bangladesh's new political order. With the Jamaat-e-Islami allegedly exerting significant influence over the current regime, the country is



witnessing shifts that challenge its foundational secular ethos. These include calls for a revised constitution, efforts to push for an Islamic state, increased hostility toward minorities, renewed ties with Pakistan, and attacks on India's traditional diplomatic and cultural partnerships. Particularly telling was a

moment during a Clinton Foundation event in September 2024, when Prime Minister Yunus publicly introduced Mahfouz Alam as the mastermind behind the "revolution" that removed Sheikh Hasina, acknowledging the movement's orchestrated nature. Such statements — perceived as "loose talk" — risk further



damaging the fragile regional balance and may alienate important international partners. The new leadership in Dhaka must understand that diplomacy requires nuance and maturity, not theatrics or polarizing rhetoric. It is vital for the Yunus government to reassure both domestic and international observ-

ers that Bangladesh remains committed to regional cooperation, secular values, and peaceful coexistence. At a time when South Asia's stability is already under stress, any reckless political posturing or ideological regression could invite economic, diplomatic, and strategic consequences that Bangladesh can ill afford.

India-China Tensions Demand Strategic Prudence

India's evolving relationship with China demands far more than diplomatic pleasantries, argues former National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan in his analysis of the persistent geopolitical unease between the two Asian giants. Under President Xi Jinping, China has abandoned the relatively conciliatory approach of Deng Xiaoping and is instead leaning into a narrative of historical grievance, seeking to reassert its position as a dominant power with ambitions rooted in the past. This self-perception as a "wronged civilization" fuels aggressive maneuvers along its borders, especially with India, as Beijing increasingly invokes the outdated frontiers of the Qing Dynasty to justify present-day territorial claims. Incidents like the border clashes in Depsang (2013), Demchok (2016), Doklam (2017), and Galwan (2020) are not isolated acts but part of a larger strategic blueprint to pressure India into accepting a skewed status quo. Despite seemingly cordial exchanges between Indian and Chinese leaders, Narayanan warns that such diplomatic warmth must be treated with skepticism, particularly when it lacks substantive shifts in behavior from Beijing. While much of the world may interpret these symbolic gestures as signs of a thaw, India—having faced the brunt of China's assertiveness—must remain wary and not mis-

take sentiment for sincerity. The global community's surprise at recent bilateral overtures only underscores its detachment from the ground realities of Sino-Indian tensions. India, Narayanan suggests, should draw lessons from its past misreadings and adopt a pragmatic approach rooted in strategic preparedness rather than optimistic diplomacy. The relative calm during Hu Jintao's leadership, which hinted at a more balanced and stable relationship, now appears to have been a fleeting interlude rather than a long-term trajectory. In contrast, the current Chinese regime's assertive policies call for India to recalibrate its defense, diplomatic, and economic strategies. Multilateral coordination, military modernization, and internal resilience must become pillars of India's China policy, ensuring that any dialogue is backed by deterrence. Narayanan emphasizes that for genuine peace and cooperation to emerge, China must offer more than rhetorical goodwill—it must prove through consistent actions that it respects the sovereignty and strategic autonomy of its neighbors. Until then, India must proceed with caution, guided by historical experience and grounded in realism. As he aptly concludes, it will take far more than lofty words for the "Elephant and the Dragon" to truly dance in harmony on the world stage.



From One Democracy to Another: A Cautionary Reflection

In this stirring open letter titled An Open Letter from India to America, author Omair Ahmad extends a heartfelt and sobering message across the Atlantic, blending empathy with caution as he reflects on the political descent of two of the world's largest democracies. Addressing Americans not as distant observers but as kin — as friends, colleagues, and kindred spirits — Ahmad draws parallels between India's current democratic backsliding and the turmoil gripping the United States. He writes not in judgment but in solidarity, recounting how India too believed its democracy was indestructible, rooted in its hard-won independence from colonialism and bolstered by decades of people-powered movements. Yet, this illusion crumbled as the country found itself spiraling into authoritarianism and exclusion, and now sees similar patterns emerging in America. The letter points out a harsh truth: that freedom for all inevitably threatens those who built their identity and privilege on the subjugation of others. Ah-

mad reminds readers that every time a society widens its promise of equality, it also disarms those who benefited from inequality — and in retaliation, these forces often cloak themselves in regressive symbols like masculine dominance, casteism, racial segregation, and fascism, which are not alien but interconnected through shared colonial legacies. He invokes the wisdom of Lincoln — "a house divided against itself cannot stand" — as both warning and lament, underscoring that the conflict is not one of policy but of moral foundations: between those who believe in justice and those who do not. The letter ends not with despair, but with an implicit call to remember the value of solidarity, to honor the difficult and incomplete journey of democracy, and to remain vigilant against the allure of exploitation disguised as power. In doing so, it becomes not just a message to America, but a mirror for India — and perhaps a guidepost for all democracies grappling with their contradictions.



‘Kasab Was Served Biryani’: Piyush Goyal Slams Congress

TPN Correspondent | Maharashtra

Union Minister Piyush Goyal has reignited a political controversy by claiming that 26/11 Mumbai terror attacker Ajmal Kasab was “served biryani” during the Congress regime. His remarks come amid the extradition of 26/11 plotter Tahawwur Rana to India from the United States.

Speaking at Mumbai’s Taj Palace Hotel, one of the sites attacked during the 2008 terror strike, Goyal accused the previous Congress-led UPA government of failing to take strong action against the terrorists. “During the Congress government, terrorists attacked this very hotel where we are standing. People died here. However, Congress did not do anything to punish the terrorists. The arrested terrorist Kasab was served biryani,” Goyal said.

Tahawwur Rana, 64, was brought to India on Thursday after the US Supreme Court rejected his final plea against extradition. He faces trial in India for his alleged involvement in planning the deadly attacks that killed over 170 people.

While Goyal’s biryani remark stirred headlines, it is worth noting that former public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam had earlier clarified in 2015 that the story about Kasab being served biryani was fabricated. “Kasab never demanded biryani and was never served by the government. I concocted it just to break an emotional atmosphere which was taking shape in favour of Kasab during the trial,” Nikam had said.

Despite the clarification years ago, the narrative continues to be invoked in political debates. Goyal further said, “It is because of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s determination that such terrorists are being brought to justice. Those who harm our country will not be spared. Tahawwur Rana will now face trial and be punished under Indian law.”

Rana’s extradition marks a significant step forward in India’s efforts to prosecute those involved in the 2008 attacks.

CJI Khanna to hear pleas against Waqf Act on April 16

- 10 petitions to be heard by a three-judge Supreme Court bench
- Petitioners include AIMIM MP Owaisi, A Raja, Amanatullah Khan
- Act faces challenge for alleged violations of religious rights

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A bench led by Chief Justice of India Sanjay Khanna, along with Justices PV Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan, will hear 10 petitions challenging the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 on April 16. The matter, listed as item 13, involves a range of petitioners including political leaders and religious organisations. The lead petition was filed by AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi, who called the Act “manifestly arbitrary” and alleged that it discriminates based on religion while violating the Shariat Act. Owaisi argued it strips the Muslim community of the right to manage its own religious institutions. Among others who moved the top court are DMK MP A Raja, AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan, All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIM-PLB), Indian Union Muslim League, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, Samastha Kerala Jem-iyathul Ulama, and NGO Association for Protection of Civil Rights. The DMK, in its petition, stated that the Act was passed despite widespread opposition and without proper consideration of objections raised in the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC). The party emphasized the law prejudices the rights of 50 lakh Muslims in Tamil



Nadu and 20 crore Muslims across India. In a press release, AIMPLB spokesperson SQR Ilyas said the amendments infringe upon Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution, which guarantee the freedom to manage religious

and charitable institutions. He accused the government of attempting to assume full control of Waqf properties, thus marginalizing the Muslim community. The Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind termed the Act a “dangerous conspiracy” against religious freedom and a direct attack on the constitutional values of equality and religious rights. Similarly, Samastha Kerala Jamiath ul Ulama, a Sunni Muslim clerics’ body, labelled it a “blatant intrusion” into religious affairs. AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan, in his plea, asked for the Act to be declared unconstitutional, citing violations of Articles 14, 15, 21, 25, 26, 29, 30 and 300-A of the Constitution. The Centre has filed a caveat in the Supreme Court, seeking to be heard before any interim orders are passed on the matter. The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, passed by Parliament and signed by President Droupadi Murmu, officially came into force on April 8, 2025, as per a notification from the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The bill was passed in the Lok Sabha with 288 votes in favour and 232 against, while the Rajya Sabha passed it with 128 votes supporting and 95 opposing. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had hailed the Waqf Bill as “another major solid step towards social justice.”

STahawwur Rana Extradited, Arrested in Delhi

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a major development in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks case, Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a Pakistani-origin Canadian-American, was formally arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) upon his arrival in New Delhi following extradition from the United States. Rana was brought to India on Thursday evening aboard a special flight from Los Angeles. His transfer was executed under tight security, with National Security Guard (NSG) commandos and NIA officers escorting him. Heavy police deployment was witnessed both at the airport and around the NIA headquarters in Delhi to ensure maximum security during the high-profile transfer.

Rana is accused of aiding the 2008 Mumbai at-



tacks, which claimed over 160 lives and injured hundreds. Indian authorities had been pursuing his extradition for years, citing his alleged involvement in the conspiracy hatched by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operatives and his close links to David Headley, the Pakistani-American terrorist who had conducted reconnaissance

missions ahead of the attacks. The extradition marks a key milestone in India’s efforts to bring all conspirators of the Mumbai carnage to justice. The U.S. government had approved his extradition last year after prolonged legal proceedings in American courts, which examined the Indian evidence against him.

In an apparent attempt to deflect attention, Pakistan distanced itself from Rana just hours before his arrival in Delhi. The Pakistani government stated that Rana was not their citizen, asserting he had not renewed his Pakistani identity documents in over two decades and is currently a Canadian national. This move is being seen by observers as an effort to minimize diplomatic fallout amid renewed scrutiny over Islamabad’s role in cross-border terrorism.

Centre Hikes Midday Meal Cost



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Centre to Bear ₹954 Crore Extra as PM-POSHAN Costs Rise Due to Inflation The Union government will bear an additional financial burden of ₹954 crore in the upcoming financial year 2025–26 due to a 9.5% hike in food material costs under the PM-POSHAN scheme, formerly known as the Midday Meal Scheme. The Ministry of Education announced this adjustment in response to rising food inflation, aiming to ensure continued nutritional support for schoolchildren.

Effective from May 1, 2025, the per-student per-day material cost for balvatika (anganwadi) and primary school children will increase from ₹6.19 to ₹6.78. For students in upper primary classes, the rate will go up from ₹9.29 to ₹10.17. This increase is expected to improve the quality of meals provided to children in government and government-aided schools across the country. The PM-POSHAN scheme plays a crucial role in addressing classroom hunger, improving nutritional levels among children, and encouraging school attendance, especially in underprivileged communities. The scheme covers over 11 crore children in more than 11 lakh schools and anganwadi

centres across India. The Education Ministry noted that the revision is done annually based on the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW), ensuring that the scheme adapts to economic changes. The last major revision was implemented in 2022. The additional expenditure will be entirely borne by the Central government, without passing the burden onto states. This move reflects the Centre’s commitment to the welfare of schoolchildren and the continued success of one of the world’s largest school feeding programmes.

Experts have welcomed the hike, calling it necessary and timely, but many also argue that further enhancements in infrastructure, meal quality, and nutritional diversity are needed for long-term impact. Advocacy groups have also urged the government to consider increasing allocations for eggs, milk, and other protein-rich items. With this adjustment, the government aims to sustain its nutrition goals and uphold the constitutional right to education and health for children from economically weaker sections. Further guidelines on the revised cost structure and implementation procedures are expected to be issued to states and UTs before the new rates take effect.

Opposition Slams DPDP Act Provision



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The controversial section, they argue, overrides a critical clause in the RTI Act—Section 8(1)(j)—which permits the disclosure of personal information if it is justified by larger public interest. The DPDP Act, which has already received Presidential assent, imposes a blanket prohibition on sharing personal data, even if it concerns public activity or interest. More alarmingly, the DPDP Act removes a vital proviso in the RTI Act that served as a transparency safeguard: “information which cannot be denied to Parliament or a State legislature shall not be denied to any person.” According to the INDIA bloc, this change effectively places government actions beyond public scrutiny.

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi condemned the provision as a “surreptitious, mischievous,

and malicious attempt” to weaken the RTI framework. “This is not just a technical amendment—it’s a direct attack on the citizen’s right to know and hold the government accountable,” he said.

The joint memorandum addressed to Union Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw urged an immediate rollback of the provision. Opposition leaders stressed that while protecting personal data is important, it should not come at the cost of weakening transparency laws that are essential in a democracy. Priyanka Chaturvedi added that the move could severely hamper journalistic investigations, whistleblower protections, and civil society efforts to expose corruption or misuse of power. “The RTI Act has been instrumental in empowering citizens. Diluting it, especially through another legislation, is both undemocratic and unacceptable,” she remarked.

China being dragged into Ukraine war, says Zelensky

155 Chinese citizens reportedly fighting for Russia



TPN Correspondent | Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has alleged that Russia is deliberately trying to “drag China into the war” in Ukraine, claiming that over 150 Chinese nationals have been recruited to fight against Ukrainian forces. Zelensky stated that Kyiv has the names and passport details of 155 such individuals and accused Beijing of being aware of the recruitment process. “This is yet another indication that Moscow simply needs to drag out the fighting,” Zelensky told reporters in Kyiv. “Such an overt involvement of Chinese citizens in combat operations on the territory of Ukraine is a deliberate step towards expanding the war.” The statement follows Ukraine’s reported capture of two Chinese citizens in the eastern Donetsk region, a development that prompted fresh concerns about the extent of foreign fighters in Russia’s ranks. Kyiv says it is prepared to release the captured Chinese nationals in exchange for Ukrainian prisoners of war currently held in Russia. Zelensky clarified that he does not believe the Chinese government directly dispatched the fighters, but maintained that Chinese authorities were aware of the recruitment process—citing platforms like TikTok and other Chinese social media sites where Russian military recruiters allegedly promote enlistment. A senior Ukrainian official also shared with AFP a document containing the names and passport details of 168 Chinese citizens allegedly serving in the Russian army, adding that further investigations are underway to identify more. China, however, rejected Zelensky’s claims. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian called the accusations “absolutely groundless” and reiterated that Beijing advises its citizens to avoid armed conflicts of any kind. “The Ukrainian side should correctly view China’s efforts and constructive role in pushing for a political resolution to the Ukraine crisis,” Lin said. When asked about the development, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov declined to comment. Meanwhile, China continues to position itself as a neutral party in the ongoing conflict, though its political and economic alignment with Moscow has drawn criticism from the West. NATO has labeled Beijing a “decisive enabler” of Russia’s invasion. Zelensky also mentioned that Washington views the presence of Chinese fighters on Ukrainian soil as “unacceptable,” signaling rising concern within the US over China’s indirect involvement. He further revealed that Kyiv is prepared to spend up to \$50 billion on American military equipment and will be holding discussions with a US delegation next week. The controversy over Chinese nationals fighting for Russia adds a new dimension to the war and raises alarms about the global ramifications of prolonged conflict in Eastern Europe.

India, UK fast-track FTA talks

Ministers reaffirm commitment to deeper trade and strategic ties during London dialogue

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

India and the United Kingdom have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and accelerating negotiations towards a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and a Bilateral Investment Treaty. In a joint statement released on Wednesday, Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves emphasized that talks are “continuing at pace” with the goal of unlocking new opportunities for both economies. The statement was issued during Sitharaman’s six-day visit to the UK and Austria, during which she co-chaired the 13th India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) in London alongside Reeves. “Both sides agree that a strong and robust UK-India relationship enhances the resilience of both economies, including through trade, macroeconomic cooperation, supply chain resilience and collaboration on global challenges, both bilaterally and multilaterally,” the joint statement read.



The India-UK FTA talks resumed earlier this year after an eight-month pause. Major sticking points in the negotiations include the UK’s planned Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), set to begin in 2026, and differences on the mobility of professionals. The UK side shared updates on its upcoming Industrial Strategy, with both countries seeing strong potential for collaboration in advanced manufactur-

ing, clean energy, life sciences, defence, financial services, and the creative sectors. The partnership aims to combine India’s growing manufacturing capacity with UK’s research and innovation ecosystem. In a boost to strategic ties, both countries also expressed anticipation for the signing of the India-UK Defence Industrial Roadmap, which will bolster collaboration across key industrial sectors and enhance supply

chain integration. In 2023-24, merchandise exports from India to the UK reached \$12.98 billion, marking a 13.3% annual rise. However, goods exports fell to \$8.4 billion, down 6.10%, according to Ministry of Commerce and Industry data. Given the backdrop of shifting global trade dynamics and protectionist measures, India is seeking to deepen partnerships that can help it navigate future uncertainties and attract fresh investments. The ministers also highlighted their cooperation in the G20 and global financial stability bodies such as the Financial Stability Board (FSB). They stressed the importance of working together on enhancing cross-border payments, climate-related financial risk management, and strengthening the non-bank financial intermediation (NBFI) framework. “We support the ongoing work... to ensure a resilient, inclusive, and stable international financial system,” the statement said, underlining the shared ambition to contribute to sustainable and equitable global economic growth.

Panama Rejects US military Base Proposal

TPN Correspondent | Panama

Panama has firmly rejected the possibility of allowing the United States to reestablish military bases or defense sites within its territory, according to a statement made by Security Minister Frank Abrego during a joint appearance with US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth. “Panama made clear, through President Jose Raul Mulino, that we cannot accept military bases or defense sites,” Abrego declared, ending speculation over a poten-



tial renewed US military presence in the Central American country. The statement came during

Hegseth’s official visit to Panama, where broader regional security cooperation and migration control were on the agenda. While no formal proposal for a military base had been publicly disclosed by the US side, Abrego’s emphatic statement suggests Panama was responding to informal discussions or suggestions made behind closed doors. Panama had hosted significant US military infrastructure in the past, most notably the Panama Canal Zone and Howard Air Force Base, until the complete with-

drawal of American forces by the end of 1999 following the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. Since then, Panama has maintained a strong stance on sovereignty and neutrality regarding foreign military presence. Observers see the Panamanian position as a reaffirmation of its longstanding foreign policy principle of avoiding entanglement in military alliances or hosting foreign troops, especially in a region where US influence has historically drawn both cooperation and criticism.

India Pulls Plug on Cargo Route for Bangladesh

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

In a significant policy shift, India has terminated the trans-shipment facility that allowed Bangladesh to export goods to third countries via Indian ports and airports. The decision, notified by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) on April 8, ends a trade route that had supported smooth cross-border flows since June 2020. The now-rescinded circular had permitted Bangladeshi cargo to pass through Indian Land Customs Stations (LCSS) en route to Indian exit points. However, the CBIC clarified that cargo already

in transit would be allowed to exit under the earlier procedure. The move comes amid rising trade tensions globally, with the US imposing fresh tariffs on countries including India and Bangladesh. Indian exporters, especially from the apparel sector, had been pressing for the withdrawal of the facility, citing reduced cargo space, rising freight costs, and airport congestion. “Now we will have more air capacity for our cargo,” said Ajay Sahai, Director General of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), welcoming the decision.



Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) Chairman Sudhir Sekhri said daily Bangladeshi truckloads caused delays and inflated air freight charges at Delhi’s IGI Airport. “This made Indian exports less competitive,” he said.

Think tank GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava warned the decision could disrupt regional trade logistics, particularly affecting landlocked nations like Nepal and Bhutan that depend on seamless movement through India and Bangladesh. Under WTO rules, members are obligated to ensure free and efficient transit for goods to and from landlocked countries — a point that may surface in future trade dialogues. The latest move reinforces India’s intent to protect its own exporters while recalibrating trade priorities in the face of shifting global trade dynamics.

IIMA to open Dubai campus in partnership with UAE

New campus to offer one-year global MBA from Sep 2025

TPN Correspondent | Dubai

In a significant move toward expanding global education ties, the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) has signed an MoU with the Government of the United Arab Emirates to establish an international campus in Dubai. The collaboration marks IIMA’s first overseas expansion and is aimed at providing world-class management education to working professionals and entrepreneurs across the globe. The MoU was formally exchanged in Mumbai by Professor Bharat Bhasker, Director of IIMA, and Helal Saeed Almarri, Director General of Dubai’s Department of Economy and Tourism. The event was attended by key dignitaries, including Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, and India’s Union Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal. The Dubai campus will be developed



in two phases. Initially, the institute will function out of the Dubai International Academic City (DIAC), a major educational hub in the region. In

the second phase, land will be allocated for a permanent IIMA facility, which is expected to be completed by 2029.

The Dubai campus will be a full-time One-Year MBA program, designed specifically for global professionals seeking to enhance their leadership and management capabilities. The course is set to launch in September 2025 and will span five academic terms. The admission process will involve a rigorous two-stage evaluation based on GMAT or GRE scores obtained within the last five years. The program will employ IIMA’s signature case study method of teaching, known for its effectiveness in experiential learning and executive education. This initiative marks a new era for Indian higher education institutions venturing into the global academic space, with IIMA leading the charge by bringing its legacy and expertise to an international audience.

Long-Term Investing: The Smart Path to Wealth Creation Amid Market Volatility"



High-Growth Potential Sectors for the Future:



1. Automobile Sector : The shift towards electric vehicles (EVs) is driving tremendous growth. Innovation, government support, and rising environmental awareness are fueling this sector's rapid expansion.

2. Pharmaceutical Sector : With increasing awareness around health-



care, advancements in medical technology, and aging populations, the pharma industry is poised for consistent growth in the coming years.

3. Information Technology (IT) Sector : Digital transformation, AI, cloud computing, and cybersecurity are



creating strong tailwinds for IT companies globally. Demand for digital services is expected to grow exponentially.

4. Metals Sector : With rising infrastructure development and industrial growth, demand for metals like steel, copper, and aluminum is expected to remain strong.



Auto Sector

1. Tata Motors: A leader in both commercial and passenger vehicles, Tata Motors has been riding high on strong domestic demand and the EV push. Its JLR (Jaguar Land Rover) arm continues to improve in profitability with growing sales in luxury electric vehicles.

2. Mahindra & Mahindra: M&M has gained significant traction in the SUV segment and agri-machinery. Its focus on electric mobility and rural demand gives it strong long-term potential.

3. Hero MotoCorp: Hero remains a key player in the two-wheeler market, especially in rural India. It's facing stiff competition in the EV space but is slowly ramping up electric offerings.

Pharma Sector

1. Sun Pharma: India's largest pharma company continues to deliver stable growth driven by strong US generics sales and specialty drug launches. It has a robust pipeline in dermatology and oncology.

2. Dr. Reddy's Laboratories: Benefiting from its generics business, especially in the US and emerging markets. Its focus on biosimilars and APIs supports long-term growth.

3. Divi's Laboratories: A global leader in custom synthesis and APIs, Divi's is well-positioned due to global outsourcing trends. It's known for strong margins and consistent performance.

IT Sector

1. Infosys: Despite short-term margin pressure due to global demand slowdown, Infosys maintains strong client relationships and is focusing on digital transformation and AI solutions.

2. TCS (Tata Consultancy Services): The IT bellwether continues to hold leadership in digital services. Long-term deal wins and strong client retention keep TCS a solid bet in IT.

3. ITIMindtree: After the merger, it's showing signs of synergy and growth potential, especially in cloud services and BFSI sector. Near-term volatility persists, but long-term outlook remains strong.

Metal Sector

1. Tata Steel: It's under pressure due to weak steel prices globally, but cost optimization and domestic infrastructure demand may provide support. Watchful on European business drag.

2. JSW Steel: Aggressive expansion plans and better integration give JSW an edge. Domestic demand, especially from infra, supports its growth outlook.

3. Hindalco: Facing global headwinds in aluminum prices, but Novelis (its US arm) and downstream investments are helping improve margins. Long-term demand in EVs and packaging remains favorable.

Investing in the stock market is a smart way to build wealth, and it doesn't have to be complicated. Whether you invest a lump sum or follow a Systematic Investment Plan (SIP), the key to success lies in adopting a long-term perspective. Market volatility—frequent ups and downs—is a normal part of the investment journey. Short-term fluctuations should not cause panic. History shows that investors who remain patient and consistent over 3, 5, or even 10 years are more likely to enjoy significant returns. The power of compounding, combined with time, works in favor of long-term investors.



Global Market Outlook:

At present, global markets are facing challenges due to political and eco-

nom ic instability, particularly in the United States. This uncertainty has led to increased volatility. However, such situations often present hidden opportunities for thoughtful and strategic investors.

Rather than reacting emotionally, it is wise to diversify investments across sectors. A well- diversified portfolio can help reduce risk and position you for future growth. Focused, long- term investing in high-potential sectors—such as automobiles, pharmaceuticals, IT, and metals—

can lead to solid financial gains over time. In conclusion, stock market investing is most rewarding for those who stay committed and look beyond short-term market movements. With patience, discipline, and the right strategy, long-term wealth creation is not just possible—it's highly probable.

Aadhaar Act set for key amendments to align with DPDP Act, 2023

New Aadhaar app launched with secure, minimal data sharing features

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The central government is planning to amend the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 to bring it in line with the provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023. The move aims to plug existing legal gaps, improve data privacy, and give citizens more control over their personal information, according to officials.

Union Electronics and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, in a video posted on X on Wednesday, said the government is focused on harmonizing the Aadhaar law with the DPDP Act by keeping "user interest at the centre." He emphasized the need for a new legal framework to streamline consent mechanisms and avoid repeated data sharing during authentication processes. "There are variety of programmes and uses where citizens are asked for consent again and again, asked to provide their data every time and at different places, for authentication. We need to have a legal framework to avoid this and ensure citizens get access to services easily," Vaishnaw said.

Officials said the amendment will focus on introducing data minimization and data erasure provisions that are currently mandated by the DPDP Act but not strictly adhered to by agencies using Aadhaar authentication. They also noted that the language of the Aadhaar Act will be made more specific to prevent the reuse of Aadhaar data for unintended purposes. The DPDP Act, passed by Parliament in August 2023, is yet to be fully implemented. Vaishnaw stated that the rules for the Act are nearly finalized and will be notified soon. In line with the upcoming amendments, the



government on Tuesday also launched a new Aadhaar mobile application that enables residents to share only essential data while availing services. The app includes face ID authentication and supports digital verification through QR codes or requesting applications, eliminating the need for physical Aadhaar card photocopies.

Tech policy experts welcomed the move. "Amending the Aadhaar Act to integrate DPDP's principles would be crucial to reducing misuse and improving consent-based data use," said Dhruv Garg, partner at the Indian Governance and Policy Project. He also recommended limiting Aadhaar usage where not necessary. In February this year, the government had expanded Aadhaar use by allowing private companies to perform Aadhaar authentication under the revised Aadhaar Authentication for Good Governance (Social Welfare, Innovation, Knowledge) Amendment Rules, 2025. This was aimed at easing access to services and preventing leakage of welfare benefits. Officials underscored that these combined measures will help prevent misuse of Aadhaar data and promote better privacy practices in both government and private sector usage.

BlackRock Bets Big On Adani With \$250 Million Investment

BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager, has become the biggest investor in a \$750 million private bond issuance by the Adani Group, acquiring nearly one-third of the offering. This marks BlackRock's first private placement in India's infrastructure sector and a major show of confidence amid ongoing scrutiny faced by the conglomerate. Sources familiar with the matter said the bonds, issued by Renew Exim DMCC—a wholly owned offshore entity of the Adani family—carry a tenure of 3 to 5 years. The capital will primarily finance the acquisition of ITD Cementation and other infrastructure-led growth initiatives.

The move comes even as Adani Group remains under the lens following a U.S. Department of Justice indictment last November in a bribery investigation. Despite this, BlackRock's participation signals it foresees no major operational risks for the group. "Infrastructure is one of the most exciting long-term investment opportunities," BlackRock



Chairman Larry Fink said earlier in January after the firm's \$12.5 billion acquisition of Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP). This deal significantly expanded BlackRock's global presence in ports, power, and digital infrastructure—sectors that align closely with Adani's long-term focus. Five other institutional investors, mostly American and European including funds managed by Sona Asset Management, also participated in the fundraising. The \$750 million issuance by Renew Exim is Adani Group's second major dollar bond transaction in 2024, following a \$200 million raise in February for its Australia

lian port operations. The recent capital raise is also the largest since the DOJ probe came to light, and signals renewed international investor interest. The acquisition of ITD Cementation, a construction and engineering firm involved in projects such as JNPT and Vizhinjam port, strengthens Adani's infrastructure portfolio. The group had initially purchased a 46.64% stake from the promoters and added another 20.81% through an open offer. Adani officials view BlackRock's involvement as a strong vote of confidence in the conglomerate's financial and operational strength, despite recent headwinds.

Audi Expands EV Network To 6,500+ Points Across India

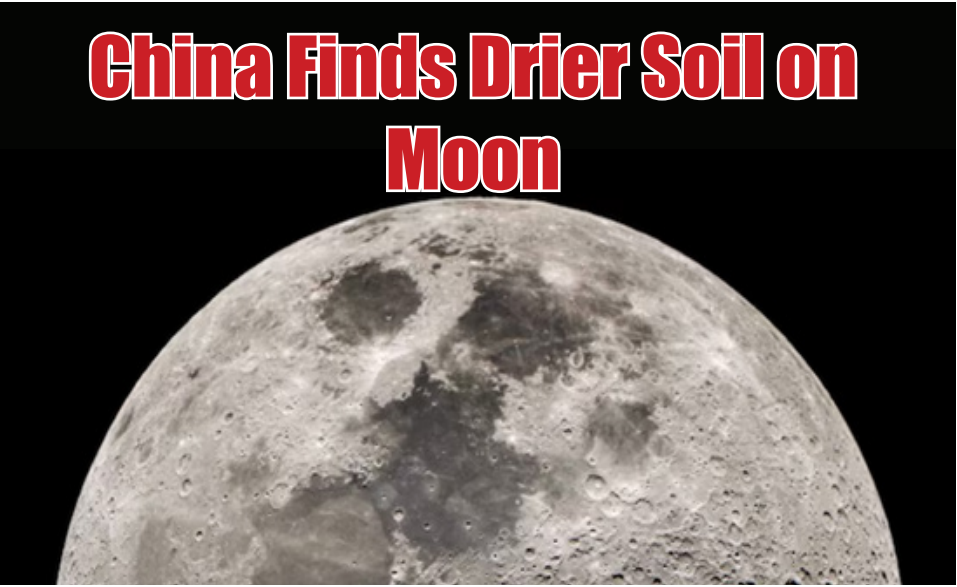
Audi India has significantly strengthened its electric vehicle infrastructure by expanding its 'Charge My Audi' initiative to over 6,500 charging points nationwide. This milestone was achieved under Phase II of the program, aiming to accelerate EV adoption among luxury car owners. The company has onboarded 16 new EV infrastructure partners to enhance accessibility and convenience. More than 75% of these locations are equipped with DC fast-charging capabilities, enabling quicker charging and catering to India's growing EV de-

mand. The Phase-II rollout alone added over 5,500 new charging points, strategically positioned along highways, in urban centers, and at key commercial hubs. With this expansion, the 'Charge My Audi' network now spans across 28 states and union territories, covering over 850 cities and 4,700+ locations. Customers can locate and operate chargers using real-time features through the 'myAudi Connect' app, which includes route planning, charger availability, and start/stop func-

tions. Commenting on the development, Mr. Balbir Singh Dhillon, Head of Audi India, said, "With over 6,500 charging points and a focus on DC fast chargers, we are enhancing convenience, reducing charging times, and expanding accessibility for our customers. The second phase marks a major step forward in enhancing the EV ownership experience." As a value addition, Audi has also extended complimentary charging for all e-tron customers across its network until December 31, 2025. This

benefit is available through its CPO partners and can be accessed via the 'myAudi Connect' app. This latest push reinforces Audi's commitment to driving the shift toward sustainable mobility in India.





In a significant lunar discovery, Chinese scientists have revealed that soil from the far side of the moon is drier than previously thought, containing less than 1.5 micrograms of water per gram—significantly lower than levels recorded on the near side. This insight, based on samples collected by China’s Chang’e 6 mission, deepens our understanding of the moon’s complex composition and geological history. The research team, led by Sen Hu from the Chinese Academy of Sciences, meticulously analyzed five grams of lunar material retrieved from the South Pole-Aitken Basin, one of the oldest and largest impact craters in the solar system. Using advanced electron microscopy, they examined 578 individual particles, identifying a stark difference in water content compared to samples from the near side. This dryness raises new questions about the moon’s formation and the processes that have shaped its two faces over billions of years. Scientists emphasize that understanding the presence and distribution of water on the lunar surface is critical not only for unraveling the moon’s evolutionary

story but also for future space exploration and potential colonization, where water could be a vital in-situ resource. While these early findings are groundbreaking, researchers caution that they are based on a limited sample size and stress the need for further collection missions to develop a more comprehensive picture. China’s successful landing on the far side in 2024 marked a historic milestone in space exploration, as no other country had previously achieved such a feat. With countries like the U.S., India, and Russia also ramping up their lunar missions, the moon remains a focal point of international scientific rivalry and cooperation. As more data emerges from upcoming expeditions, including future Chinese missions, this discovery may influence the trajectory of lunar science, particularly regarding how water is stored and transported on the moon. For now, the findings suggest the moon’s far side may hold more secrets than previously believed, and only through deeper exploration can humanity hope to fully understand our celestial neighbor’s past—and its potential future.

KFC’s Chicken-Flavored Toothpaste Sells Out



In one of the most unexpected brand collaborations to date, KFC has teamed up with Australian dental care company Hismile to launch a limited-edition fried chicken-flavored toothpaste, and, unsurprisingly, it has already sold out. Inspired by the fast-food giant’s iconic blend of 11 herbs and spices, the toothpaste was designed to offer an “irresistible” brushing experience that mimics the sensation of biting into a piece of hot, juicy Original Recipe KFC chicken—while still leaving users with a “fresh and clean” finish. The novelty product quickly captured public attention and social media buzz for its outrageous concept, merging fast food indulgence with daily hygiene in a way few expected. While the collaboration may sound like a stunt, it was very real and highly limited, turning the bizarre idea into an overnight cult favorite. KFC, known for its creative and often quirky marketing campaigns, described the product in a press release as both flavorful and functional, blending a unique senso-

ry experience with the utility of oral care. Though the toothpaste was not released for widespread sale, it became an instant viral hit, with fans rushing to get their hands on it before stocks vanished. Reactions online ranged from amused curiosity to disbelief, with many joking about brushing three times a day—or more—just for the taste. Though there’s no word yet on whether KFC and Hismile plan to restock or expand the product line, the overwhelming response suggests a growing appetite for oddball, experience-driven products that turn everyday routines into novelty moments. This isn’t KFC’s first foray into unconventional products; the brand has previously launched everything from chicken-scented candles to fashion collabs. However, this chicken-flavored toothpaste might just be its most bizarre—and successful—creation yet, proving once again that in the age of viral marketing, anything is possible, even brushing your teeth with fried chicken.

Tamil Nadu Kids Go Viral Globally

A heartwarming video featuring students from a government school in Tamil Nadu has taken the internet by storm, amassing over 100 million views and capturing hearts worldwide. Shared by a teacher from Melur Panchayat Union Kindergarten and Middle School in Therkamoor, the video shows a group of young children—mostly girls and one boy—dancing and singing to the viral Thai song Anan Ta Pad Chaye. Dressed in school uniforms, the children deliver a pitch-perfect rendition of the song, dancing joyfully with infectious energy and enthusiasm. Their flawless timing and genuine happiness have made the video a viral sensation, with social media users praising both their talent and the cultural crossover. One of the standout



performers, a girl named Shivadarshini, has become a particularly beloved figure online, having already gained attention from a previous viral video shared by the same teacher. The clip highlights not just the global nature of internet trends, but also the ability of children to bring joy across borders through music and dance. The Thai

song itself has been trending for weeks on various platforms, with people from around the world jumping on the dance challenge. However, it’s this group of spirited schoolchildren who have truly stolen the spotlight, showing that talent and joy can shine from even the most unexpected corners. Their performance, filled with bright smiles and heartfelt energy, reflects the universal language of music and underscores the power of digital platforms to amplify voices and talents regardless of location. The teacher’s decision to share the video not only gave the children a chance to be seen and appreciated globally but also turned a simple classroom performance into a worldwide celebration of joy, rhythm, and innocence.

Kareena Kapoor’s Bizarre Party Avatar

In a viral moment that’s baffled and amused the internet in equal measure, a Karachi party featured a bizarre digital cameo of Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor Khan—sort of. A poorly animated avatar of the actress was projected on a big screen, grooving awkwardly to loud rave music, supposedly to energize the crowd. Instead of glamming up the scene, the surreal spectacle left partygoers and netizens laughing, confused, and ultimately turning the odd creation into meme fodder. The creator behind the animated Kareena took to Instagram to explain that the track was inspired by the film Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham, particularly Kareena’s iconic character “Pooh.” Claiming the moment was meant to be “chaotic and iconic,” the creator added that he sampled one of her famous lines and wanted to add a unique visual twist for the show. However, the end



result—a glitchy, awkward rendition of Kareena’s likeness awkwardly dancing—missed the glam mark by miles. Social media reactions ranged from light-hearted roasting to genuine confusion, with users questioning both the animation quality and the concept itself. While some found it endearingly chaotic and praised the experimental effort, others couldn’t resist sharing the clip with captions like “Kareena.exe has stopped working.” The incident has sparked debates over digital creativity, celebrity deepfakes, and how far is too far when it comes to virtual appearances. Regardless of where opinions fall, the animated Kareena moment has certainly made its mark—albeit as a cautionary tale of how not to digitally resurrect a Bollywood icon at a rave.

Underwater Pyramid Fuels Atlantis Theorie

A mysterious 90-foot underwater structure known as the Yonaguni Monument, located near Japan’s Ryukyu Islands, has reignited debate among scientists, archaeologists, and history enthusiasts about the origins of ancient

civilizations. Discovered in 1986, this vast stone formation lies 82 feet beneath the ocean and resembles a pyramid with sharply angled steps—features that many believe suggest it was crafted by human hands. What’s most puz-



zling is that geological tests date the monument to over 10,000 years old, a time that predates known human architectural achievements like the Egyptian pyramids or Stonehenge. If confirmed as man-made, this would drastically alter our understanding of when complex societies capable of such engineering feats first emerged—pushing the timeline back to well before the widely accepted start of agricultural civilizations. This has led some to liken Yonaguni to the mythical lost city of Atlantis. Yet, skepticism remains, with many experts

arguing the formation could be the result of natural tectonic activity rather than ancient construction. The controversy recently took center stage on the Joe Rogan Experience podcast, where author Graham Hancock and archaeologist Flint Dibble debated the site’s authenticity, further amplifying public interest. As debate swirls around its origins, the Yonaguni Monument continues to captivate imaginations worldwide, standing as either a naturally occurring wonder—or evidence of a forgotten chapter in human history.

World’s Largest Snake Gathering in Canada

Every spring, a remarkable natural event unfolds in Manitoba, Canada, where the Narcisse Snake Dens become the site of the world’s largest snake congregation. Over 75,000 red-sided garter snakes emerge from limestone sinkholes after months of braving sub-zero temperatures underground. These dens, no bigger than a living room, offer insulation during the region’s frigid winters that can plunge as low as -45°C, making them ideal hibernation shelters. As the weather warms, the snakes surface in vast numbers for their annual mating ritual, forming dense, swirling masses that blanket the ground in a mesmerizing, if somewhat spine-tingling, spectacle. The sheer scale of the gathering attracts thousands of visitors and scientists every year, turning the quiet Canadian landscape into a temporary wildlife tourism hub. The snakes—largely harmless to humans—entwine in what’s known as “mating balls,” where dozens of males compete for a single female, creating a chaotic but fascinating sight. Beyond the visual spectacle, new scientific research has uncovered surprising complexity in their behavior. A study published in “Behavioural Ecology” in late 2023 revealed that some species of garter snakes, like Butler’s garter snakes, display social structures reminiscent of mammals, with groupings organized by age and sex. This challenges the longstanding belief that snakes are solitary creatures and opens new avenues



of research into reptilian social dynamics. The Narcisse Snake Dens not only serve as a critical ecological habitat but also as a living laboratory where scientists can study the interactions, communication, and survival strategies of garter snakes in large populations. For casual observers and researchers alike, this annual phenomenon is a rare and awe-inspiring example of nature’s intricacy—an event where biology, survival, and spectacle converge. As concerns about biodiversity and climate change grow, the Narcisse snake gathering also stands as a reminder of the importance of preserving such unique ecosystems for future generations.

Dhoni Returns as CSK Captain After Gaikwad Injury Blow

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have suffered a major setback ahead of their IPL 2025 campaign, as skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad has been ruled out of the tournament due to an elbow fracture. In a familiar turn of events, legendary former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni will step in to lead the side once again.

CSK head coach Stephen Fleming confirmed the news during a press interaction on Thursday,

stating, “Ruturaj Gaikwad ruled out of IPL with fracture on elbow. MS Dhoni to take over as captain.” Gaikwad, who was appointed full-time captain for the 2025 season, sustained the injury during training. Dhoni’s return to captaincy brings both experience and calm to the squad as CSK aim for another strong season. Fans can now look forward to seeing “Captain Cool” back in action, steering the yellow brigade once more.



Chandigarh Thrash Opponent in U20 NFC Opener



Chandigarh made a resounding start to the Swami Vivekananda U20 Men’s National Football Championship with a dominant win on the opening day. The team stormed to a 4-0 lead by half-time, effectively sealing the match early. Manveer Singh opened the tournament’s scoring in the 15th minute, capitalizing on a loose ball to tap in from close range. He doubled his tally in the 28th minute with

a clinical right-footed finish into the bottom corner. Sahil starred with a brilliant hat-trick, netting in the 39th, 43rd, and 64th minutes. His goals showcased composure and sharp finishing, including a smooth one-on-one and two quickfire close-range strikes. With this emphatic win, Chandigarh has set the tone for the tournament and sent a strong message to their rivals early on.

Anand Backs Gukesh for Norway Chess Clash with Carlsen

Indian chess legend Viswanathan Anand has thrown his support behind teenage sensation Gukesh Dommaraju ahead of his much-anticipated showdown with world No. 1 Magnus Carlsen at Norway Chess 2025. The prestigious tournament will be held in Stavanger, Norway, from May 26 to June 6. Speaking at an event hosted by Norway Chess and the Sports Journalists Association of Mumbai (SJAM), Anand expressed confidence in Gukesh, the youngest world champion in chess history. “I expect a very exciting



battle. Gukesh will not lack motivation or determination to go after Magnus,” said Anand. “Magnus, too, is highly driven to face young talents. We have the

perfect storm here.” The face-off promises to be one of the most thrilling duels of the year, as Gukesh looks to challenge Carlsen’s dominance on the global stage.

Rice Shines as Arsenal Stun Real Madrid 3-0



Arsenal took a commanding step toward the Champions League semifinals with a stunning 3-0 victory over defending champions Real Madrid at The Emirates on Tuesday. Declan Rice was the star of the night, netting two sensational free kicks to put the Gunners in control of the quarterfinal first leg.

The third goal came from Mikel Merino, who finished clinically to cap off Arsenal’s dominant performance. Real Madrid looked off the pace from the start, struggling to cope with the hosts’ intensity. One of the few early chances for Madrid nearly turned disastrous, as Eduardo Camavinga almost

scored an own goal after deflecting Antonio Rudiger’s clearance. Thomas Partey tested Thibault Courtois soon after, but the Belgian keeper denied him. With Rice’s brilliance and solid teamwork, Arsenal now carry strong momentum into the second leg at the Santiago Bernabéu.

Rahul’s Masterclass Leads Delhi Capitals to Victory Over RCB



In a thrilling clash held at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru, the Delhi Capitals (DC) secured a dominant six-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in the 24th match of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025. KL Rahul, leading from the front, played a sensational captain’s knock to guide his team to a convincing victory. Winning the toss, RCB opted to bat first and managed to post a total of 163 for 7 in their allotted 20 overs. Though they started well, the middle-order couldn’t maintain the momentum, leading to a below-par finish. Delhi’s bowlers kept things tight, picking up wickets at regular intervals and denying RCB a late flourish. Chasing 164, Delhi Capitals made their intent clear from the start. KL Rahul an-

chored the innings with an unbeaten 93 off just 53 balls, laced with elegant boundaries and well-timed sixes. His knock was a perfect blend of aggression and composure, taking the pressure off the rest of the batting lineup. Rahul found support from the middle order, and the Capitals comfortably chased down the target in 17.5 overs, finishing at 169 for 4. With this win, Delhi Capitals continue their strong form in the tournament, while RCB are left to reconsider their game plans after another disappointing outing. KL Rahul was rightfully named Player of the Match for his stellar performance. The win has further cemented Delhi’s position on the points table as they continue their march towards the playoffs.

Sindhu Advances, Lakshya Crashes Out in Asia Badminton Opener



PV Sindhu made a strong start at the Badminton Asia Championships, defeating Indonesia’s Ester Nurumi Wardoyo 21-15, 21-19 in 44 minutes. The world No. 17 will face Japan’s Akane Yamaguchi, seeded third, in the pre-quarterfinals. However, it was disappointment for India in the men’s singles. Lak-

shya Sen suffered a first-round exit, losing 18-21, 10-21 to Chinese Taipei’s Lee Chia Hao. HS Prannoy also bowed out, falling 16-21, 21-12, 11-21 to China’s Zu Guang Lu. Kiran George brought some cheer, progressing to the pre-quarters with a 21-16, 21-8 win over Kazakhstan’s Dmitriy Panarin.

In women’s singles, Aakarshi Kashyap, Anupama Upadhyaya, and Malvika Bansod were all ousted in the opening round. In men’s doubles, Hariharan Am-sakarunan and Ruban Kumar comfortably beat Sri Lanka’s Madhuka Dulanjana and Lahiru Weerasinghe 21-3, 21-12 to reach the Round of 16.



Keerthy Suresh’s Bollywood Leap of Faith

Keerthy Suresh, known for her endearing screen presence and strong youth fanbase, has long focused on Tamil cinema while maintaining occasional appearances in Telugu films. Despite once being among the top names in Tollywood, she hasn’t scored a major hit since *Dasara*. Following that, Keerthy continued to prioritize Tamil projects, but her ambitions have now shifted towards Bollywood. Though her debut Hindi film *Baby John* failed to leave an impact at the box office, she’s determined to prove herself in the Hindi film industry. Buzz suggests she has signed an upcoming film opposite Rajkumar Rao. Like many South actresses—such as Ileana, Kajal Aggarwal, Tamannaah, and Shruti Haasan—who tried their luck in Bollywood with mixed results, Keerthy too faces the challenge of standing out in a competitive arena. Whether her graceful persona and talent will help her succeed where others struggled remains to be seen, but her resolve to make it big in Bollywood is



Akhil & Zainab’s Sunset Serenade

Tollywood’s favorite couple, Akhil Akkineni and fiancée Zainab Ravdjee, lit up social media with a tender beachside moment that felt straight out of a romance film. Celebrating Akhil’s 31st birthday, the pair embraced under a golden sunset, their heartfelt hug capturing the essence of love and serenity. Dressed in coordinated yellow

tops and cream-toned bottoms, the duo stood barefoot against the backdrop of gentle waves, exuding intimacy and elegance. The candid photo, likely from a Maldives-esque getaway, instantly resonated with fans, sparking admiration across the internet. No filters, no captions—just raw emotion and an unspoken bond.



Ajith’s Triple Act Misses the Mark

In **Good Bad Ugly**, Ajith Kumar attempts a roaring comeback under the direction of die-hard fan Adhik Ravichandran, but the film ends up as a mixed bag. Riding high on fan anticipation and vintage Ajith vibes teased in trailers, the film delivers action-packed sequences and a stylized narrative, but falters when it comes to emotional depth and coherence. Adhik, who previously wowed audiences with **Mark Anthony**, gives Ajith a platform to shine in multiple shades, but

the script feels stretched and uneven. Trisha Krishnan and the ensemble cast including Arjun Das, Sunil, and Prabhu add star power, yet their roles often feel underwritten. GV Prakash’s music elevates some moments, but overall, the film doesn’t quite land the punch it promises. Despite flashy

visuals and a fan-service approach, **Good Bad Ugly** struggles to balance style and substance, resulting in a film that’s watchable but far from a blockbuster. Verdict: Ajith sparkles, but the story doesn’t.



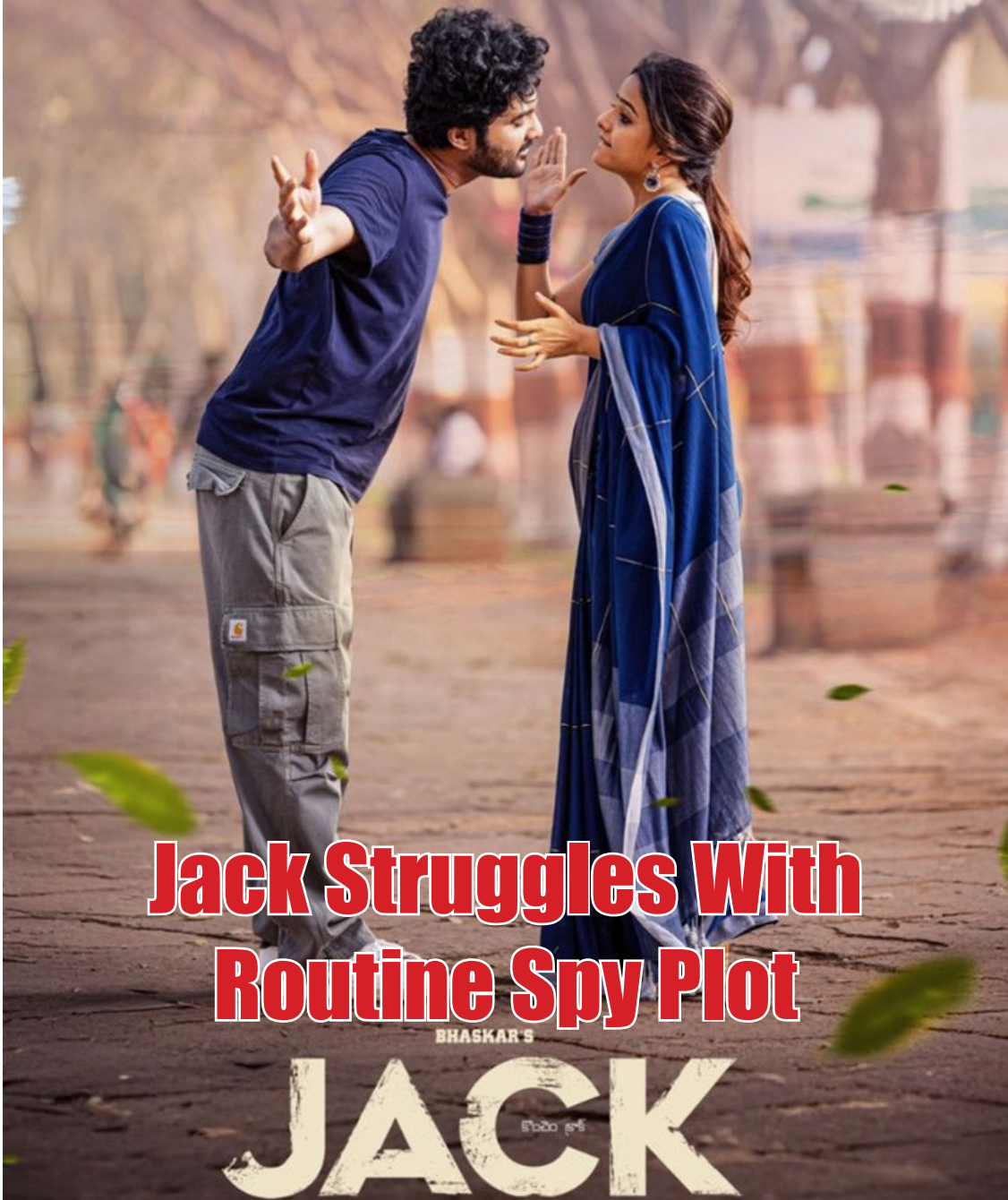
Tabu, Vijay Sethupathi Join Forces

In a major announcement that thrilled cinema lovers, filmmaker Puri Jagannadh revealed his upcoming pan-Indian film starring powerhouse performers Tabu and Vijay Sethupathi. Taking to social media on April 10, Jagannadh shared a photo featuring himself, Tabu, and producer-actor Charmee Kaur, officially welcoming Tabu onboard. He described her as “electric” and “explosive,” calling her role in the film as dynamic as her presence.

The project, dubbed #PuriSethupathi, marks a high-profile collaboration and is produced under the banner of Puri Connects by Jagannadh, Charmee Kaur, and Vishu Reddy. With filming scheduled to begin in June, fans are eagerly awaiting further details. This marks a rare and exciting team-up between two of Indian cinema’s most versatile actors, promising a unique cinematic experience across languages and regions.



Siddhu Jonnalagadda, known for his quirky charm in *DJ Tillu* and *Tillu Square*, returns with *Jack*, directed by Bommarillu Bhaskar and co-starring Vaishnavi Chaitanya. Despite a trailer that promised Siddhu’s signature wit, the film fails to deliver, falling into the trap of a predictable spy thriller. The plot follows Pablo Neruda alias Jack, an aspiring RAW agent who takes matters into his own hands to stop a terrorist conspiracy across major Indian cities. Things take a twist when he mistakenly captures a real RAW officer (Prakash Raj), prompting a private investigation by his father involving a detective’s daughter (Vaishnavi), who also becomes his romantic interest. While the film attempts to blend patriotism, suspense, and romance, the weak screenplay and routine narrative make it an underwhelming watch, raising doubts about whether Siddhu’s charm alone is enough to carry such formulaic storytelling.



Upasana’s Portable Kitchen for Ram Charan

One meal has to be Indian.” To avoid fire alarms in hotels, they even use the cooker inside the shower area, plugged in carefully for safe, home-cooked comfort food. Interestingly, this practice also inspired her mother-in-law to turn traditional Indian staples into ready-to-use mixes, now a small business venture she began in her 60s. For Ram Charan, it’s not just about taste—it’s about tradition, and Upasana ensures he never misses a bite of home, no matter the timezone.



Upasana Konidela has revealed a charming behind-the-scenes routine from her life with Global Star Ram Charan: she carries a cooker wherever they travel to ensure he gets at least one Indian meal a day. Known for his spiritual discipline

and rooted lifestyle, Ram Charan insists on eating Indian food regardless of where in the world he is. In a recent interview, Upasana opened up about this unique travel ritual, saying, “My husband has to eat Indian food wherever we are in the world.