

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

H 33° C
L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

H 35° C
L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

H 36° C
L 26° C



Caste Census Promise Will Be Fulfilled, Says CM Siddaramaiah

CM says caste census covered 98% of rural, 95% of urban Karnataka with scientific approach.

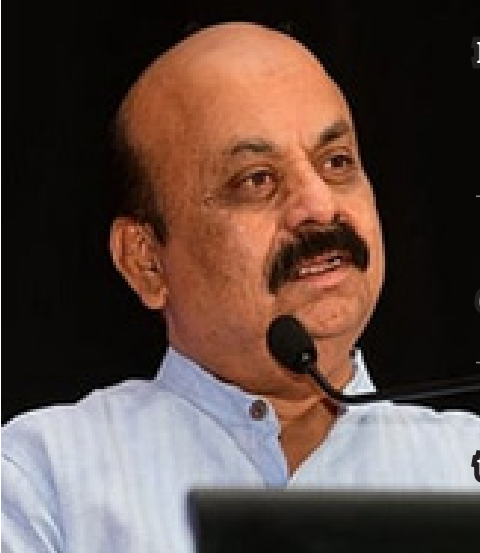
Vows to present caste census findings in Assembly, calls it a Congress manifesto promise.

Hits back at BJP's criticism, slams Shettar's remarks and Centre's fuel pricing policies.

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah reaffirmed his government's commitment to completing and presenting the caste census, terming it a scientifically conducted exercise covering 98% of Karnataka's rural and 95% of urban population. Speaking to media at Belagavi Airport, he said the census was a key promise in the Congress party's election manifesto and would be fulfilled without delay. Rejecting BJP's allegations that the caste census was unscientific, Siddaramaiah said, "The survey was carried out effectively with the help of thousands of schoolteachers. Though covering 100% is always a challenge, we have come very close to full coverage. The data will soon be presented in the Assembly." He added that the caste census is critical to assess the socio-economic, educational, and financial status of various communities. "A similar exer-

cise hasn't been done since 1931. Both the High Court and the Supreme Court have asked states to provide empirical data. This makes the caste census not just relevant, but necessary," the Chief Minister explained. Targeting former CM Jagadish Shettar for calling the census ineffective, Siddaramaiah remarked, "Shettar lacks a basic understanding of how such surveys are conducted. He was unfit as Chief Minister and remains unfit as Opposition leader." The Chief Minister also responded to the BJP's ongoing Janakrosha campaign against price hikes, questioning their moral authority to protest. "When the Centre itself has hiked petrol, diesel, and LPG prices, how can the BJP claim to care about inflation?" he asked. He pointed out that fuel prices have risen sharply despite international crude oil prices dropping to USD 65 per barrel — nearly half the cost during UPA rule when rates touched USD 120 per barrel.

SIT Probe Must Include 60% Graft Charges Against Karnataka Govt - Basavaraj Bommai



Former CM Bommai demanded SIT to probe corruption allegations in present Congress-led government.

Said contractor bodies alleged 60% commission in departments like public works, excise, and electricity.

Claimed contractors are reluctant to take up work due to non-payment despite tender approvals.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
BJP MP and former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has demanded that the Special Investigation Team (SIT) proposed by the Karnataka government must also look into the "60 per cent corruption" allegations against the current Congress-led administration. Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Bommai said that contractor associations from the public works, excise, and electrical departments have openly accused the government of demanding up to 60 per cent commission for works. The former CM responded strongly to the government's decision to constitute an SIT to investigate the "40 per cent commission" charges that were levelled against the previous BJP government. He insisted that the Congress government's alleged misdeeds over the past two years should also fall under the SIT's purview. "In the last two years, multiple allegations have emerged against the present government, far worse than

what was claimed during our tenure. These serious 60 per cent commission charges cannot be ignored," Bommai said. He also demanded that the report of the commission constituted to examine the "false propaganda" about 40 per cent corruption during the BJP's rule be made public. Highlighting the financial mismanagement, Bommai said, "The government doesn't even have funds to pay for completed projects. Though tenders have been awarded, contractors are reluctant to begin work due to delays in payment." He accused the government of crippling infrastructure development and questioned the sincerity of the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, who are now asking people to approach the Lokayukta if there are any commission-related complaints. Bommai's remarks come amid growing political friction in Karnataka, with the opposition stepping up its criticism of the state's governance and corruption record.

Seva Dal is Congress's Pillar of Strength, Says Dy CM DK Shivakumar



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar participated in the state-level conference of the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Seva Dal held at Bharat Jodo Bhavan, where he highlighted the vital role played by the organization in strengthening the Congress party's grassroots structure. Addressing party workers, Shivakumar said Seva Dal is the foundation upon which the Congress party stands. "Seva Dal is the pillar

DK Shivakumar addressed Karnataka Pradesh Congress Seva Dal's state-level meet at Bharat Jodo Bhavan.

Emphasized importance of service, comparing societal reverence for Anjaneya over Rama.

Stated every Seva Dal member carries leadership potential; urged workers to uphold values of selfless service.

of Congress. Every worker here carries leadership potential. The Gandhi cap worn by our cadre is not just a symbol — it reflects our values and discipline," he stated. Quoting a cultural analogy, Shivakumar remarked, "People worship Anjaneya, the devotee of Lord Rama, with greater devotion and build more temples for him than for Rama himself. This shows that society respects and remembers those

Trump Tariff Hits Karnataka Granite Exports, Containers Pile up at Chennai Port

TPN Correspondent | Mysuru
The Karnataka granite industry has taken a major hit following the recent imposition of a 10% tariff by US President Donald Trump on Indian goods. Exporters say the move has led to container loads of granite piling up at the Chennai port, with shipments stuck and production disrupted across key quarrying districts. Chamarajanagar, known for its premium black granite used in monuments and tombstones, has seen over 50 quarries either halting or slowing production. Similar scenes are reported from Khanapur, Kalaburagi, Bagalkot, and Bidar. Quarry owners are staring at heavy losses, as each container now incurs an additional cost of approximately Rs 1.5



lakh. "This has caused panic among exporters, especially with the fear that tariffs may rise further after the 90-day negotiation window declared by the US," said Sreenath of SVG Gran-

ite, whose company exports 25 containers monthly. "Twenty-five percent of our US-bound shipments are now stuck at the Chennai port," he added,

Union Minister HDK Slams Karnataka CM Over ₹500-Crore Illegal Mining Scam



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Union Minister and JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy launched a scathing attack on Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, accusing the Congress-led state government of being involved in a ₹500-crore illegal mining scandal. Speaking at the "Saakappa Saaku, Congress Sarkara" protest at Freedom Park, he claimed corruption has engulfed every depart-

ment under the current administration. Kumaraswamy questioned Siddaramaiah's silence on reports of massive kickbacks during mining lease renewals. "Isn't it true that the state exchequer suffered a ₹5,000-crore loss? There is already a request before the governor for a prosecution sanction. Why hasn't the CM responded?"

Kambala to be Held During Dasara Kreedakoota in Mysuru – Dy CM DKS

- Kambala to be included in Mysuru’s Dasara celebrations
- Land to be identified for the event, with space for 25,000 spectators
- Deputy CM aims to take Kambala to an international level



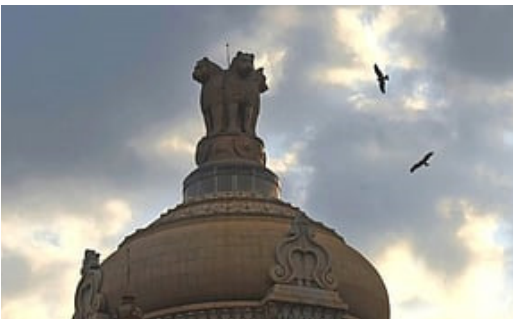
TPN Correspondent | Mangaluru

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar announced that Kambala, the traditional buffalo race, will be a part of the upcoming Dasara Kreedakoota celebrations in Mysuru. Speaking at the Gurupura Kambala event, Shivakumar stated that the inclusion of Kambala in Mysuru’s Dasara festivities is a step towards preserving and promoting this cultural tradition. He emphasized that about three acres of land would be set aside to host the event, which will accommodate around 25,000 spectators. Shivakumar further revealed that he had instructed Deviprasada Shetty, president of the DK Kambala Samithi, to formulate a plan for the event. The government will offer all necessary support to make this a recurring event every year. He also highlighted the intention to elevate Kambala to an international level, ensuring it gains widespread recog-

nition. Additionally, Shivakumar mentioned his plans to meet with the tourism minister in Mangaluru to discuss tapping into the region’s tourism potential. He expressed concern over the youth from Dakshina Kannada and Udupi moving out for employment opportunities, suggesting that tourism development could create local jobs and help retain talent in the region. The Deputy CM also acknowledged the importance of preserving the cultural and historical heritage of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, areas known for their educational institutions and religious significance. The announcement has been met with support from local leaders, including Gurupura Kambala President Inayat Ali and former minister Ramanath Rai.

Quota Hike Likely for ‘Backward’ Groups Among Muslims, Lingayats in Karnataka

- State panel recommends OBC quota rise from 32% to 51%
- Cabinet may form sub-panel on April 17 meeting
- Constitutional amendment required to exceed 50% reservation cap



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission has recommended a substantial hike in reservations for various backward communities, including Muslims, Vokkaligas, and Lingayats, based on findings from the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey. The state cabinet, scheduled to meet on April 17, is likely to deliberate on the report and may constitute a cabinet sub-committee to examine the proposals in detail. Headed by K Jayaprakash Hegde, the commission submitted its report to

the state government, proposing a restructuring of the reservation system based on the population and degree of backwardness within each community. The proposals, if accepted, would raise the total reservation in Karnataka from 32% to 51%, surpassing the 50% ceiling imposed by the Supreme Court—thus requiring a constitutional amendment. Key among the recommendations is an increase in the quota for Muslims under the 2B category from 4% to 8%.

Similarly, the quota for Vokkaligas and their sub-sects under 3A could be raised from 3% to 7%, and for Lingayats and their sub-sects under 3B from 4% to 8%. The report also suggests increases for other backward castes: a 6% hike under Category 1A, 12% under 1B, and 10% under Category II for various eligible groups. These moves aim to provide a more equitable share of reservation benefits in proportion to each community’s socio-economic condition and population size. The Siddaramaiah-led government may push the Centre to take up the issue through a constitutional amendment, given the legal constraints surrounding the 50% cap on quotas. The final decision, however, hinges on the upcoming cabinet discussion and potential political consensus.

Address Regional Imbalance, Curb Corruption: Experts Urge Karnataka Govt

- Kalyana Karnataka trails in HDI, education, per capita
- Panel led by Prof Govind Rao studying regional disparities
- CM’s aide flags corruption, seeks quality governance focus



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Experts and political leaders are calling on the Karnataka government to adopt a balanced, development-centric approach to tackle regional disparity and systemic corruption. The demand gained urgency following remarks by Chief Minister’s Economic Advisor and senior Congress leader Basavaraj Rayareddi, who flagged the poor quality of developmental works in Kalyana Karnataka and raised concerns about rampant corruption. Rayareddi’s statements, made during a meeting of the Regional Imbalance Redressal Committee headed by economist Prof Govind Rao, sparked political ripples but also cast a spotlight on long-standing governance concerns in

the state’s most backward regions. Kalyana Karnataka continues to rank lowest in key development indicators, including education, healthcare, and per capita income, according to the Karnataka Economic Survey 2024–25. Districts like Yadgir, Kalaburagi, and Raichur fare poorly on the Human Development Index, while Bengaluru Urban and Dakshina Kannada lead the state. The committee has been tasked with identifying the structural causes of regional imbalance, such as infrastruc-

ture gaps, historical neglect, and lack of private investment. Its findings are expected to guide future policy and will be submitted by the end of the year. Currently, 76 taluks fall below the state’s HDI average of 0.573, and the Kalaburagi revenue region ranks lowest in per capita income and educational outcomes, including the recently announced II PU exam results. Experts emphasize the urgent need to boost industries and services in these districts. Prof Govind Rao underlined the importance of urban hubs in driving growth but stressed the foundational role of education and healthcare. He also warned that without proper implementation, even well-intended schemes would fail. Political commentators argue that the state government must stop viewing critical issues like regional imbalance through a partisan lens and instead focus on transparent, inclusive governance that prioritizes people over politics.

18% GST Applicable on Apartment Maintenance Above ₹7,500: Centre

- GST not applicable if RWA turnover is under ₹20 lakh
- Entire maintenance fee taxed if above ₹7,500 monthly
- RWAs can claim Input Tax Credit under current rules



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Ministry of Finance has issued a clarification on the imposition of Goods and Services Tax (GST) on maintenance charges collected by Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), following widespread confusion highlighted in a recent media report. According to the official statement, GST at 18% is applicable only if two conditions are met: the maintenance charges exceed ₹7,500 per month per member, and the RWA’s annual turnover crosses ₹20 lakh. If either condition is not met, GST is not applicable. For residents owning multiple apartments, the ₹7,500 exemption is calculated per apartment. However, in cases where the maintenance fee exceeds ₹7,500, GST is charged on the full amount, not just the excess. For example, if maintenance is ₹9,000 per month, the 18% GST is applicable on the full ₹9,000. The Ministry pointed out that this tax structure follows a decision made during the 25th GST Council meeting held on January 18, 2018, which had raised the exemption limit from ₹5,000 to ₹7,500 to benefit housing societies. In a move aimed at easing the burden on RWAs, the government also reminded stakeholders that RWAs are entitled to Input Tax Credit (ITC) under GST. This means they can claim credit on GST paid on purchases for goods like taps, pipes, and furniture, as well as services like maintenance and repair. Such benefits were not available in the pre-GST era under VAT, making GST relatively more favourable for RWAs managing large residential complexes. The Ministry’s clarification is expected to provide relief and clarity to thousands of housing societies and apartment owners across the country who were uncertain about their tax liabilities.

Karnataka Caste Census ‘Leaked’: Split Data Shows SCs, Muslims as Largest Communities

- Muslims form 12.87% of population; SCs account for 18.27% when grouped
- Vokkaligas, Lingayats split into sub-castes, lowering overall share
- Final report to be placed before Cabinet on April 17

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A controversial set of figures from the Karnataka Socioeconomic and Educational Survey (SES) – 2015, widely regarded as the state’s caste census, has surfaced ahead of its official release. Shared by a Congress legislator, the data indicates that Muslims, at 12.87%, constitute the single largest community if treated as a homogenous group, while Scheduled Castes (SCs), when clubbed, make up the largest block at 18.27%. The survey, conducted by the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission under Kantharaju’s leadership, covered 5.98 crore of the projected 6.35 crore population. About 37 lakh people, or 5.83%, were left out. The figures reportedly split communities such as Lingayats and Vokkaligas into various sub-castes, which, according to sources, was due to participants preferring to identify themselves by their specific sub-caste during enumeration. For instance, the dominant Lingayat population was fragmented into categories like Panchamasali Lingayats (1.79%), Veerashaiva-Lingayats (2.99%), and smaller groups such as Gani-ga, Jangama, and Nonaba Lingayats, reducing the perceived collective strength. **According to the leaked figures:**

- **Muslims:** 76.99 lakh (12.87%)
- **Vokkaligas:** 61.68 lakh (10.31%)
- **Veerashaiva-Lingayats:** 66.35 lakh (11.09%)
- **Kurubas:** 43.72 lakh (7.31%)
- **SC Left:** 35.99 lakh (6.02%), **SC Right:** 34.98 lakh (5.85%), **SC (Others):** 19.82 lakh (3.31%)
- **STs:** 42.81 lakh (7.1%)
- **Brahmins:** 15.64 lakh (2.61%)

Communities like Billavas (1.04%), Edigas (0.80%), Besthas (2.12%), and Devangas (1.05%) were also identified separately. Notably, 3.32 lakh individuals (0.56%) chose to identify themselves as having “no caste.” Jains and Christians made up 0.70% and 1.44%, respectively. Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna refuted reports of a leak, stating the data was still under the government’s control and would be officially tabled after the Cabinet meeting on April 17. “Constructive criticism will be welcome once the data is public,” he said.

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Trump Tariff Hits Karnataka Granite Exports, Containers Pile up at Chennai Port

noting ongoing negotiations with American clients to share the burden of increased costs. Quarry owners pay Rs 7,000 per cubic metre in taxes and produce up to 150 cubic metres of granite monthly — 70 to 80% of which is exported. The industry contributes significantly to the state’s revenue, with annual exports valued around Rs 10,000 crore. GM Hegde, president of the District Granite Owners Association, warned that Chinese buyers may also withdraw, following the US’s

125% tariff on Chinese imports, which will block their re-export business using Indian granite. “The domestic market has improved slightly, but it’s not enough to sustain the industry. With crores already invested in machinery and operations, any prolonged disruption will affect thousands of workers,” Hegde said, urging the Union commerce ministry to intervene and engage with US authorities to safeguard the industry.

Union Minister HDK Slams Karnataka CM Over ₹500-Crore Illegal Mining Scam

he asked, warning that he possessed extensive documentary evidence. “They bring truckloads of fake documents to harass me, but I’m not afraid. I have tonnes of real documents. If I open them, people will chase this government away. No one can silence me,” Kumaraswamy declared, calling the current dispensation the worst ever in Karnataka’s history. JD(S) youth wing chief Nikhil Kumaraswamy echoed the accusations, calling Siddaramaiah the “fountainhead” of corrup-

tion. Slamming the steep hikes in prices of fuel, electricity, and essential services, Nikhil said the Congress government’s five guarantees are offset by continuous price hikes. “They give with one hand and take back with the other. People are forced to rise in rebellion,” he added. After the protest, Nikhil and several JD(S) workers attempted to march towards the Vidhana Soudha. However, they were stopped and briefly detained by the police before being released later in the day.

Seva Dal is Congress’s Pillar of Strength, Says Dy CM DK Shivakumar

who dedicate themselves to service. That is the kind of recognition service brings.” He reminded the gathering that opportunities exist for everyone within the party, but service must come first. “We must never forget that in this organization, the opportunity to grow is open to all. But service must always be our top priority,” he urged.

The Deputy CM called on Seva Dal members to continue their commitment to the party’s ideals and prepare to connect with people across Karnataka. He emphasized that the future of the party lies in disciplined, service-oriented leadership that upholds the legacy of the freedom movement and the vision of Mahatma Gandhi.

In Karnataka Two Booked for Illegal Stone Quarrying on Government Land

TPN Correspondent | Udupi

The Karkala town police have booked two individuals for illegal stone quarrying on government land in Karkala Taluk, Karnataka. The raids were conducted by the police after receiving information about ongoing illegal activities at two separate locations.

In the first case, Police Sub-Inspector Lohith Kumar CS, along with his team, raided government land located in Survey Number 181/1 of Jarkala. Two individuals were caught in the act, but upon noticing the approaching police vehicle, they fled the scene. Investigations later identified Surendra as the person behind the illegal quarrying. Authorities seized several tools from the site, including two iron crowbars and an iron chain. A case was filed against Surendra un-



der the BNS and MMRD Act.

In a separate incident, Police Sub-Inspector Shivakumar SR raided another quarry site at Survey Number 245 in Jarkala, Eralpadi village, where no workers were present. However, the site showed clear signs of illegal quarrying. Further inquiries revealed that Ramesh had been conducting quarrying activities for personal gain without the necessary permits. A case has been registered against Ramesh under similar charges. Both individuals face serious charges, and investigations are ongoing to gather further details.

Bhutai's Murder Sends Shock Waves Among Mangaluru Auto Drivers

TPN Correspondent | Mangaluru

The murder of Mohammed Sharif (52), popularly known as Bhutai, has deeply shaken the autorickshaw driver community in Mangaluru. Bhutai's body was recovered from a well in Kunjathur, within Manjeshwar police station limits, on Friday. A beloved figure among drivers, he was known for his jovial nature, discipline, and apolitical stance. "He was always smiling, never uttered a foul word, and treated everyone with respect," said Shivanand, a fellow driver at the Kottara Chowki stand. Bhutai hailed from Kolnad in Mulki and was a daily fixture at rickshaw stands across Mangaluru. "He was punctual, never overcharged, and always went back home before midnight," Shivanand added. Bhutai, who earned his nickname from his love for sardine fish, stood out for his neat khaki uniform and well-maintained vehicle. Many drivers suspect he was abducted by addicts posing as customers and murdered while en route home. The possibility of involvement

by drug addicts, referred to as the "ganja gang," is being looked into. Kottara Chowki Auto Stand president Manoj Kodikal described the murder as "a jolt" to the entire fraternity. Another driver, Suresh from Bikarnakatte, angrily demanded immediate arrest of the perpetrators, calling them nayilu (dogs) in Tulu. "We are scared now," he said, echoing growing fears about driver safety, especially at night or in isolated areas. The incident has also caught the attention of the Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI). DYFI district president B K Imthiyaz and secretary Santhosh Bajal, in a joint statement, demanded a full investigation into the murder and urged that the culprits be brought to justice without delay. They also sought maximum compensation for Sharif's family.

They recalled similar previous cases where auto drivers like Idayath in Natekal, Lancy in Tokkottu, and Rifai in Netakere were killed under suspicious circumstances. "Auto drivers are increasingly vulnerable amid the district's communal politics," the statement added.

Karnataka Congress' Appeasement Politics for Muslims Could Lead to Bengal-like Violence: P C Mohan

- **BJP MP accuses Karnataka Congress of dangerous appeasement politics**
- **Cites violence in Murshidabad, West Bengal, as a potential warning**
- **4% reservation for Muslims in public contracts described as appeasement**

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru Central MP P C Mohan has warned that the Karnataka Congress' appeasement politics, particularly its move to provide 4% reservation for Muslims in public contracts, could lead to violence similar to what has been witnessed in Murshidabad, West Bengal.

Mohan, in a tweet on Sunday, criticized the Karnataka government for what he termed as a dangerous tactic of appeasement. He linked the violence in Murshidabad,



which resulted in three deaths during protests over the Waqf (Amendment) Act, to the West Bengal government's similar appeasement politics. Mohan further claimed that Hindus in Murshidabad were being forced to flee due to the state's pol-

icies. "What's happening in Murshidabad is a direct result of the West Bengal State Government's dangerous politics of appeasement, forcing Hindus to flee. Karnataka Congress's appeasement tactics, like 4 per cent Muslim reservation in government

contracts, could lead to the same fate. Wake up, Hindus!" Mohan stated.

The controversial "Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements (Amendment) Bill, 2025," which was passed by the state legislature last month, reserves 4% of public contracts for Muslims in civil works valued up to Rs 2 crore and in goods/services procurement contracts up to Rs 1 crore. The bill is awaiting the Governor's assent to become an Act.

Mohan shared a video showing families fleeing Murshidabad, further fueling his concerns about the potential consequences of similar policies in Karnataka.

If Kabaddi Gets Included in Olympics, India Has Great Opportunity: Dakshina Kannada MP

TPN Correspondent | Mangaluru

Dakshina Kannada MP Capt Brijesh Chowta expressed optimism about India's chances in the global sporting arena, especially if kabaddi is included in the Olympics. Speaking at a kabaddi mat distribution event held for eight taluks in Dakshina Kannada, Chowta highlighted the transformation in India's sports landscape over the past decade under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Chowta, who was speaking at the event held at Sparsha Kala Mandira

in Bantwal, emphasized the central government's commitment to providing opportunities and infrastructure for athletes, particularly in rural areas. He noted that initiatives like 'Khelo India' have changed the way sports are promoted and supported across the country. He added that the Modi government's focus on grassroots development and taluk-level facilities has paved the way for a sports revolution in India.

"If kabaddi is included in the Olympics, it will be a great opportunity for India, and we must ensure

that local athletes are prepared to take full advantage of this," Chowta said, urging kabaddi teams and student-athletes to make the most of the available support.

He also thanked the New Mangalore Port Authority for its backing and called on both public and private institutions to offer employment opportunities to sportspersons.

Venkata Ramana Akkaraju, Chairman of New Mangalore Port Authority, assured continued support for athletes. Bantwal MLA Rajesh Naik Ulippany also spoke at the event, ex-



pressing his commitment to supporting athletes in his constituency, while Moodbidri MLA Umanatha Kotian recalled his own experience as a kabaddi player during his college

days. Other prominent figures present included Kreedha Bharati State Vice President B Nagaraj Shetty and Rakesh Malli, State Chairman of the Amateur Kabaddi Association.

MCC to Join Hands with BPCL to Make Mysuru a Zero-Waste City

TPN Correspondent | Mysuru

Mysuru City Corporation (MCC) has partnered with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) to establish a Rs 65 crore Solid Waste Management (SWM) plant aimed at converting organic waste into biogas. This collaboration will help transform the city into a zero-waste model, addressing the challenge of managing the 600 tonnes of solid waste generated daily in Mysuru.

The proposed facility will process 200 tonnes of organic waste per day and generate renewable energy in the form of



Compressed BioGas (CBG), significantly reducing the environmental burden. The plant will be located near the sewage treatment plant at Vidyaranyaapuram and is expected to help clear approximately 7 lakh tonnes of legacy

waste, with 40% already processed.

The project, which is in line with national sustainability goals, aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from decomposing waste and promote renewable energy gener-

ation. It will also play a critical role in mitigating water pollution caused by leachate during the monsoon season. BPCL will set up and operate the CBG plant, funded through its own resources or through a private partnership model. The company will also handle the long-term operation and maintenance of the plant. The biogas will be purified, converted into CBG, and sold for use as an alternative fuel for transportation.

This initiative is part of the Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) scheme, which aims to promote CBG as an afford-

able and sustainable fuel. BPCL's investment will not only support waste management but also contribute to India's energy independence.

MCC Assistant Executive Engineer Mrutyunjaya confirmed that the project would help integrate various government programs, including Swachh Bharat Mission, Smart Cities, and Clean Air initiatives. The MCC is set to provide land for the plant for 20 years and supply waste for biogas production. This collaboration marks a significant step toward a more sustainable and eco-friendly Mysuru.

KSDMA Flags 82 Landslide-Prone Sites, Districts Yet to Act

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

With pre-monsoon showers already arriving and the full monsoon barely two months away, the Karnataka State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) has raised concerns over the lack of preparedness in vulnerable regions. The KSDMA has expanded its list of landslide-prone sites from 75 to 82, identifying high-risk areas not only in the traditional hilly districts of Kodagu, Chikkamagaluru, Shivamogga, and Hassan but also in new zones like Mangaluru, Belagavi, Londa, and the Karnata-



ka-Goa border.

Despite issuing multiple circulars and holding meetings, the KSDMA

confirmed that district administrations have not initiated preventive measures on the ground.

"We've advised placing nets on slopes, sandbags in flood-prone areas, and pruning overhanging

branches. But none of this has been implemented," said a senior KSDMA official.

The alarm comes in the backdrop of last year's deadly landslide near Shirur on National Highway 66, where eight lives were lost. Post-tragedy, the KSDMA flagged several hazardous practices like cutting hills at steep angles using heavy machinery. "Sadly, these methods continue," the official noted, expressing frustration over ongoing infrastructure activities without safety safeguards.

KSDMA Commissioner S Honamma reiter-

ated that circulars with detailed anti-landslide protocols have been sent to all deputy commissioners. However, execution remains stalled. The prolonged dry spell from November to March was a window of opportunity that went unused, officials said.

On its part, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) claims delays are due to land acquisition and surveys. "Land is essential for road widening and slope protection. In places like Shirur and Udupi, even surveys took 3-4 months, and actual work about 9-10 months," said

NHAI Karnataka Regional Officer Vilas Brahmankar. He added that tenders for works in Sakleshpur and Hassan have been called.

The NHAI, along with the Geological Survey of India, has identified 12 vulnerable sites along NH-66 and is working with the National Institute of Rock Mechanism to implement slope stabilization, drain works, and soil-tightening measures.

Meanwhile, the KSDMA has appealed to holiday-goers planning trips to the Western Ghats to strictly adhere to safety precautions as monsoon risks loom large.

Bengaluru Cops Crack Down on IPL Betting

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a major crackdown on illegal IPL betting, Bengaluru police have seized Rs 1.15 crore in cash across five separate cases within a week. A significant portion of this — Rs 86 lakh — was confiscated on Thursday alone, pointing to the growing scale and sophistication of betting operations in the city.

Police investigations have uncovered a web of dubious mobile apps and websites being used to facilitate betting on various aspects of IPL matches, including match outcomes, player performances, and even the toss. Some of the prominent platforms discovered include Paarker, Rilex, Dubai Exchange, Lotus, and Biggbull 24/7.

A senior police officer involved in the probe said these apps are cleverly disguised, often mimicking the names and appearance of legitimate financial or trading platforms to evade scrutiny. “Thousands of users access these platforms regularly,



unaware or indifferent to the illegality involved,” the officer noted.

Sources in the police department revealed that many of these applications operate through encrypted communication channels, making it difficult to trace transactions and the flow of money. Some apps are hosted on servers based outside India, adding an extra layer of complexity to the investigation.

In addition to cash seizures, police have also detained several individuals suspected of acting as agents or intermediaries. They are now being questioned to gather more de-

tails about the network’s operations, including links to larger betting syndicates operating across state and international borders.

Authorities have issued a warning to the public to refrain from using unverified apps and websites for betting. Police are working with cybercrime units and financial intelligence teams to track down and block these platforms.

With the IPL season in full swing, law enforcement agencies have intensified surveillance to curb illegal gambling activities. More arrests and seizures are expected as investigations progress.

BWSSB Seeks Power to Curb Borewells

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Struggling to tackle the growing issue of illegal borewells, the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) is considering proposing amendments to the Karnataka Ground Water (Regulation and Control of Development and Management) Act, 2011. The move aims to give the water board greater authority to independently take action against violators.

Under the current provisions of the Act, drilling borewells without permission is treated as a non-cognisable offence. This classification restricts immediate police intervention, often requiring the BWSSB to approach the magistrate before any legal action can be taken.

Dr Ramprasad Manohar V, Chairman of BWSSB, ex-

pressed concern over the inefficacy of the current legal framework. “Since it’s a non-cognisable offence now, even when we approach the police, they do not take action and we are told to approach the magistrate. This is making it difficult to prevent illegal borewells,” he said.

BWSSB officials believe that upgrading the offence to a cognisable category would empower law enforcement agencies to take prompt action, thereby acting as a stronger deterrent against illegal drilling. The water board also seeks increased enforcement authority, allowing it to penalise offenders more effectively without depending heavily on external agencies.

Although the existing law allows for penalties, implementation on the ground has been weak



due to the limited powers of the BWSSB.

The proposed legal amendment is likely to include stricter punishment and clearer guidelines for enforcement, including real-time monitoring and coordination with police and local bodies. With Bengaluru already facing severe groundwater depletion and water scarcity

concerns, officials warn that unchecked borewell drilling could lead to dire consequences. Strengthening the legal framework is seen as a critical step to safeguard the city’s dwindling groundwater resources. The BWSSB is expected to formally present its recommendations to the state government in the coming weeks.

Brand Bengaluru Drive Raises Questions

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

As part of the ambitious “Brand Bengaluru” initiative, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has launched a series of beautification projects across the city. From LED-lit Metro pillars and ornamental fountains to redesigned traffic junctions and landscaped medians, these upgrades aim to transform Bengaluru into a “world-class” and “vibrant” city.

The initiative, dubbed “Brand Bengaluru – Vibrant Bengaluru,” is being promoted as a bold urban revamp to enhance the city’s visual appeal. The BBMP has earmarked substantial funds, including Rs 50 crore for decorative lighting and Rs 25 crore for the development of land-



scaped spaces and other enhancements.

However, the drive has sparked a growing debate among citizens and urban experts over its sustainability and prioritisation. While the art and aesthetics of public spaces have certainly improved, critics argue that the focus on cosmetic improvements may be overlooking more pressing infrastructure is-

sues.

“Beautification doesn’t fix Bengaluru’s core problems like poor footpaths, chronic flooding, pot-hole-ridden roads, and ineffective waste management,” said one concerned resident.

Many citizens have taken to social media to question whether public money is being used efficiently, especially in the

absence of consistent basic services.

Some citizens have also expressed concerns about energy usage and environmental impact, especially with the installation of decorative LED lighting. Others question the long-term maintenance of the new installations.

Despite the criticism, BBMP officials maintain that the initiative is part of a broader plan to uplift the city’s image and attract tourism and investment. They insist that infrastructure development and aesthetics can go hand in hand.

As the debate continues, the spotlight remains on how Brand Bengaluru will evolve—whether as a truly inclusive urban upgrade or just a surface-level makeover.

CREDAI Urges Karnataka to Speed Reforms

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

CREDAI Bengaluru has once again appealed to the Karnataka government to act swiftly on long-pending concerns affecting the real estate sector. Despite receiving positive responses on some issues, key challenges like TDR revalidation, single-window clearance, and property tax clarity still await government action.

In a statement released recently, CREDAI (Confederation of Real Estate Developers’ Associations

of India) highlighted that one of the most pressing issues is the revalidation of old Transferable Development Rights (TDR) certificates, which continues to delay the inclusion of these certificates in the building plan sanction process. Developers argue that the lengthy procedures are holding up projects and increasing costs.

The association also called for the establishment of a single-window clearance system for approvals, a move they believe would drastically

improve the ease of doing business in the sector. Developers currently face time-consuming and often inconsistent approval processes across different departments.

While the government has shown willingness to engage with the sector — evident in progress on issues such as e-khata implementation, premium Floor Area Ratio (FAR), and clarity on car parking in property tax calculations — CREDAI noted that the momentum needs to be sustained.

Another specific demand is to increase the allowable height for still parking from the current norm to 4.5 meters, which would help in better parking infrastructure in new projects. CREDAI is also seeking reforms in TDS (Tax Deducted at Source) processes to simplify compliance for developers and reduce administrative overheads. The ball is now in the state government’s court as developers await concrete steps to address these long-standing issues.

BBMP Ad Revenue Stalled by Court Case

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike’s (BBMP) ambitious plan to boost revenue through outdoor advertising has hit a legal roadblock, leaving the civic body with zero earnings from this stream in the 2024–25 financial year — despite projecting Rs 500 crore in revenue.

The setback stems from the delay in implementing a new advertisement policy, which remains entangled in a case pending before the High Court of Karnataka. The proposed policy was aimed at bringing transparency to the outdoor advertising sector and breaking the monopoly of a few dominant players. Inspired by Delhi’s advertising framework, the BBMP’s new policy was designed to replace the 2018 Outdoor Signage and Public Messaging By-laws. Those older byelaws had imposed a near-blanket ban on commercial hoardings across the city in an attempt to curb visu-



al clutter and illegal structures.

to dominate the limited space legally available, sidelining broader participation and transparency in ad rights allocation.

The BBMP hoped the new policy would address these issues by opening the sector to fair competition, regularising advertising spaces, and enforcing stricter guidelines on location, size, and design. Officials believed it could become a major revenue source for the city, especially as traditional revenue avenues have been under stress.

Unfortunately, with the policy still stuck in court, the civic body was unable to issue new tenders or formalise any advertising deals this fiscal year. This has further strained BBMP’s finances and delayed potential urban development projects that could have been funded through ad revenues.

Civic officials remain hopeful that the High Court will soon clear the policy, paving the way for a cleaner, more regulated advertising landscape and much-needed revenue for Bengaluru’s growing urban needs.

Doctors Launch Liver Study for IT Workers

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A team of hepatologists in Bengaluru has launched a unique public health initiative titled “Liver Tech Check” to study the growing incidence of liver disease linked to sedentary, tech-driven lifestyles — particularly among the city’s vast IT workforce.

The study focuses on Metabolic Dysfunction-Associated Steatotic Liver Disease (MASLD),

a condition formerly known as non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. Doctors involved in the initiative warn that this disease is spreading at epidemic proportions, largely due to prolonged physical inactivity, erratic eating patterns, increased screen time, and chronic stress — all common characteristics of digital work environments. “IT professionals are a high-risk group. They spend long

hours sitting, often eat high-calorie food, and get little physical activity. This combination leads to fat accumulation in the liver, which over time can cause inflammation, fibrosis, and even cirrhosis,” said one of the lead hepatologists. The “Liver Tech Check” study will survey a large cohort of IT employees from various companies across Bengaluru’s tech corridors. The team plans to conduct health

screenings, liver function tests, and lifestyle assessments. The goal is not only to understand the prevalence of MASLD but also to spread awareness about liver health in the tech industry.

Early findings from pilot screenings suggest that a significant number of young professionals already show warning signs of liver dysfunction — often without any symptoms. Doctors emphasize that

the disease is reversible in its early stages through lifestyle modifications like regular exercise, a balanced diet, and stress management.

With Bengaluru being home to India’s largest concentration of tech workers, the outcomes of this study could have far-reaching implications for public health planning and workplace wellness programs.

The hepatologists aim to present their findings



to both medical authorities and corporate stakeholders, hoping it will trigger policies promot-

ing healthier work environments and routine liver health check-ups for tech employees.

Tree Felling in Mysuru Sparks Outrage

TPN Correspondent | Mysuru

A serene Sunday morning in Mysuru turned grim as residents awoke to the shocking sight of 40 fully-grown trees felled overnight along a stretch earmarked for road widening. The move, sanctioned by the Forest Department, was carried out with little public knowledge, sparking widespread condemnation from environmentalists and local citizens alike.

The felling operation, which took place under the cover of darkness, saw the use of heavy earth-movers to swiftly cut

down and begin clearing the trees. The sudden transformation of a once-green stretch into a bare landscape stunned morning walkers and residents. Social media platforms were flooded with images of the destruction, amplifying public outrage and triggering a wave of criticism over the lack of transparency.

Environmentalists termed the action as a blow to the city's already depleting green cover. "These trees were decades old and provided shade, cleaner air, and were home to several birds and small animals," said one local activist. "This isn't

development; it's devastation."

Deputy Conservator of Forests, Dr. K.N. Basavaraj, confirmed that the Mysuru City Corporation had obtained official permission for the tree felling as part of a road widening project. "As per compensatory afforestation norms, the corporation will have to plant 10 saplings for every tree cut," he said, adding that a total of 400 saplings will be planted in various locations across the city.

However, critics argue that saplings can never replace the ecological and environmental value of mature trees. "There's no

guarantee these saplings will survive. And even if they do, it will take decades for them to provide the benefits those 40 trees did," said a member of a local environmental group.

The incident has reignited debate about balancing infrastructure development with environmental conservation. Citizens are demanding more transparency and community participation in such decisions.

Meanwhile, civic officials insist the road expansion is crucial to reduce traffic bottlenecks in the rapidly growing city. But for many Mysureans,



the cost of convenience has come at the expense of nature. With pressure mounting from activist groups and citizens, the incident is likely to prompt greater scrutiny of future urban development projects in the city.

Chennai's Parandur Airport Takes Flight



TPN Correspondent | Chennai

After years of delays and deliberations, Chennai's aviation ambitions have received a major boost with the in-principle approval for a second airport at Parandur in Kancheepuram district. The proposed facility, projected to handle up to 100 million passengers annually, marks a significant leap in Tamil Nadu's infrastructure story.

The Parandur airport will feature three midfield terminals and two parallel runways, matching global standards. Its design aims to ease the burden on the existing Chennai International Airport, which has struggled for years with congestion, outdated infrastructure, and limited expansion capabilities.

The groundwork for the second airport was laid three years ago, but the need had been apparent for over a decade. Chennai, once a leading aviation hub in South India, has been steadily overtaken by Bengaluru and Hyderabad in both infrastructure and traffic. Once proud of direct links to global cities like London, New York, and Singapore, the city has since lost its edge. The current airport now ranks only fifth in the country, far from its

past prominence.

The new Parandur airport is envisioned as a comeback — a statement of intent to reassert Chennai's strategic importance in both domestic and international aviation. It's expected to not only enhance passenger experience but also expand the city's freight handling capabilities, thereby boosting trade and regional development. However, the project has not been without criticism. Environmental groups have raised concerns about potential ecological damage, including the loss of wetlands and agricultural land.

Social justice advocates, too, are apprehensive about displacement of local communities and lack of adequate rehabilitation plans. As the state pushes ahead, balancing development with sustainability and equity will be crucial. Ground surveys, environmental assessments, and community consultations are expected to intensify in the coming months.

With this mega project now on the runway, Chennai's second airport at Parandur could very well shape the city's economic and infrastructural future — but only time will tell if it takes off smoothly or runs into turbulence.

Mangaluru Railway to Get Unified Setup

TPN Correspondent | Mangaluru

In a significant move aimed at improving rail infrastructure and passenger amenities, Minister of State for Railways V. Somanna announced that the Mangaluru Railway Region will soon be brought under a single administrative setup.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, after flagging off the extended services of the Mangaluru Central-Kabaka Puttur Passenger up to Subrahmanya Road, Mr. Somanna stated that unifying the administrative control will enhance coordination and operational efficiency in the re-



gion.

"The Ministry of Railways is committed to strengthening the railway network in coastal Karnataka. Bringing the Mangaluru Railway Region under one administrative umbrella will help address local issues more effectively

and speed up developmental projects," he said.

Currently, the Mangaluru railway zone falls under the jurisdiction of multiple divisions, creating delays and logistical challenges for infrastructure expansion, maintenance, and service

upgrades. A unified administrative system is expected to streamline decision-making and reduce bureaucratic hurdles.

Railway users and officials have long demanded a single-point authority for better handling of the region's rail infrastructure, which serves as a crucial link between Kerala, Karnataka, and Goa.

Mr. Somanna also highlighted the importance of extending the Mangaluru Central-Kabaka Puttur Passenger to Subrahmanya Road. "This extension will benefit daily commuters, pilgrims, and local travelers by improving regional connec-

tivity," he noted, adding that more initiatives are on the way to boost passenger convenience.

The move comes amid increasing pressure from local leaders and stakeholders to invest in Mangaluru's railway infrastructure, given the city's growing importance as a commercial and transit hub.

With this announcement, the railway ministry appears to be taking a more focused approach toward coastal Karnataka's transport needs, setting the stage for long-term improvements in rail connectivity and service quality in the region.

Kerala Temple Ends Caste Barriers

TPN Correspondent | Kerala

In a powerful assertion of equality and inclusion, the centuries-old Pilicode Rayaramangalam temple in Kasaragod district witnessed a historic moment as devotees from all communities were granted entry into the nalambalam — the sacred inner precinct — for the very first time. This landmark move signals a permanent end to caste-based restrictions at the temple, which had long allowed access to the sanctum sanctorum only for select upper-caste communities. On Sunday, people from various social backgrounds entered the four sanctums of the revered temple together in an emotionally charged event that echoed the spirit of Kerala's long-standing reformist traditions.

The inclusive temple entry was made possible following a sustained campaign by a progressive organisation that worked in collaboration with temple authorities and community leaders. The initiative was aimed at restoring the spiritual rights of all devotees, regardless of caste or social background. "This is not just about entering a physical space. It's a symbolic and spiritual liberation that upholds the dignity of all individuals," said one of the campaign leaders. The decision has been welcomed by social reformers, human rights advocates, and many religious scholars who view it as a revival of the temple's original spirit of inclusivity. The Pilicode Rayaramangalam temple, with its deep historical and



cultural significance, has now become a beacon of progressive change. The reform also aligns with the larger socio-religious reform movements Kerala has been known for since the times of Sree Narayana Guru and other 20th-century reformers.

While a few conservative voices have expressed discomfort with the change, the overwhelming response from the public has been celebratory. Devotees gathered in large numbers, many shedding tears of joy, as the temple doors opened wider than

ever before — both literally and symbolically. As chants echoed through the ancient temple corridors and lamps flickered in welcome, the event marked a defining step towards inclusivity and social harmony in Kerala's spiritual landscape.

Karnataka Hikes Minimum Wages Sharply



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

In a major move aimed at addressing the rising cost of living, the Karnataka government has proposed a sharp increase in minimum wages across various employment categories. As per a draft notification issued by the Labour Department on Friday, the monthly wage for unskilled workers in Zone 3 has been fixed at ₹19,319.36 — a substantial 70% hike from the existing rate. The revised wage

structure, which includes variable dearness allowance, comes at a critical time when inflation and price rise have been squeezing household budgets across the state. The proposed hike is seen as a response to the growing demands from workers' unions and social welfare groups for wage revisions to keep pace with economic realities. According to the draft, highly skilled workers in thermal power stations will now be eligible for wages up to

₹34,225.42 per month — the highest under the new schedule. In Zone 1 areas, known for high industrial activity, highly skilled workers will be entitled to a minimum wage of ₹31,114.02.

The notification covers around two crore workers employed in 100 scheduled sectors — including manufacturing, construction, textiles, and transport — with 18 new categories added in recent years. Labour officials noted that the revision aims

to reflect contemporary work conditions and cost dynamics while ensuring economic dignity for workers across both urban and rural areas.

Worker unions have largely welcomed the proposed hike, calling it a long-overdue corrective measure. "This is a victory for labour rights," said a representative of a Bengaluru-based trade union. "But we hope this is implemented without delay and strictly enforced."

Meanwhile, some in-

dustry representatives have expressed concerns over the potential impact on small businesses and MSMEs, urging the government to provide transitional support or subsidies to help adapt to the new wage standards. The draft notification is open for public feedback and objections, after which the government will finalize the revised wage structure. If implemented, it will be one of the most significant wage hikes in Karnataka in recent decades.

Trump’s tariff policies spell global economic turbulence

Trump’s tariff policies are sounding the alarm bells for what could very well escalate into a full-blown trade war, potentially triggering a global economic disaster or a severe recession. There is a general perception, particularly within government circles, that these tariffs imposed by the United States will not significantly impact India. However, this assumption is far from the truth.

The reality is that India will not remain insulated from the ripple effects of these protectionist measures. While the impact may not be immediately visible, the country’s economic growth is likely to become unstable in the foreseeable future. Even when growth resumes, it may neither be steady nor robust, it could be sluggish, if not outright crippling. The contri-

bution of individual states to the national economy is bound to take a hit, as their local economies are poised to slow down under external pressures.

One of the major fallouts of the US tariff regime will be a likely increase in unemployment across sectors, accompanied by a spike in inflation. These twin evils, joblessness and rising prices will directly affect the common man. The already low incomes of the middle and lower-income groups will shrink further, pushing them into greater financial distress. Their struggle for survival will become more acute, and savings, already meagre, will dwindle from their pockets.

With governments facing economic stress and public discontent, public spending is bound to rise. This would



**Yanamala
Ramakrishnu**
*Authour, Former
Finance Minister*

be an attempt to compensate for the economic pain felt by citizens due to sluggish growth and income stagnation. People’s expectations from the state will increase, but fulfilling them in a fiscally constrained environment will only add to the government’s debt burden. Simultaneously, the pressure of personal loans on individuals is worsening the economic fragility of households.

The volatility in global markets triggered by these tariffs could lead to a sudden fall in stock markets, which in turn will erode the value of people’s investments and hard-earned savings. Trump’s tariff-driven policy moves, what I call Trump’s Tariff Trumpets (TTTs) are in fact severe blows to the global economic system.

India, and more specifically its states, including Andhra Pradesh, cannot remain untouched by this whirlwind. If governments do not address the situation with foresight and effective policy responses, the fallout could derail national developmental visions such as Swachh Bharat and others. But if approached with the right strategies, the crisis could be transformed into an opportunity for course correction and structural reforms.

Failing to act decisively, however, will only exacerbate inequality and deepen poverty. Under such circumstances, economic development will remain a distant dream. TTTs are not mere trade barriers they are ticking time bombs that threaten the very foundation of equitable and sustainable development.

A Tribute to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar – A Visionary Beyond His Time

- **Pandit Nehru made a historical wrong by not appointing Dr. Ambedkar as minister of education.**
- **Congress’s Failure to Honor Dr. Ambedkar: A Nation’s Unfinished Acknowledgment**

Tribute to one of the greatest minds and visionaries our nation has ever produced—Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. A jurist, an economist, a social reformer, and above all, a tireless advocate for justice and equality.

But while we celebrate him as the Father of the Indian Constitution, if Dr. Ambedkar had been appointed as India’s first Education Minister by Nehru the shaping the destiny of India’s youth right from beginning would have been different.

Pandit Nehru’s decision : A Historical Wrong

History often remembers great leaders for what they did—but it must also reflect on what they failed to do.

One such missed opportunity was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s decision not to appoint Dr. B.R. Ambedkar as India’s first Education Minister. In doing so, a man who understood the grassroots crisis of illiteracy, who lived through the social exclusion that millions of Indians still face, and who stood as a symbol of the transformative power of education, was sidelined from the very ministry that could have reshaped the destiny of India’s youth.

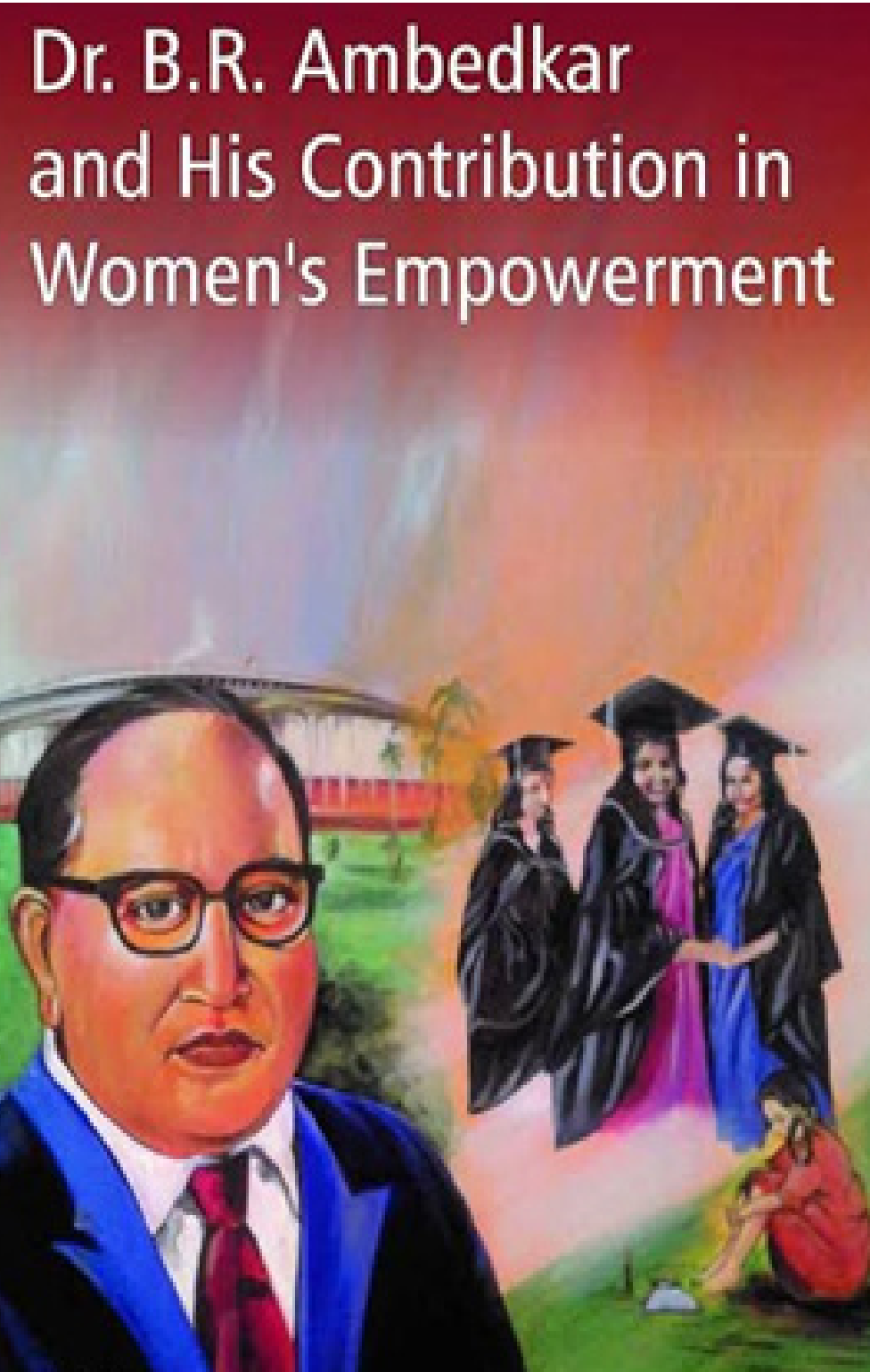
Instead of placing one of the most educated, visionary minds in charge of national education, India handed the reins to others who—while competent—did not carry Ambedkar’s lived experience of marginalization or his urgency for educational justice.

This was not just a political oversight—it was a historical wrong.

Ambedkar didn’t just believe in education—he embodied its power to liberate. His life was a testament to how knowledge could break chains of caste and poverty. Had he been given the responsibility, India’s education system might have focused earlier on equity, social inclusion, and empowerment, not just literacy and bureaucracy.

Today, as we look at the gaps that persist in our education system—whether it’s caste-based inequality, dropout rates, or the urban-rural divide—we must also look back and ask: What if Dr. Ambedkar had led us from the very beginning?

It’s time we not only honor his memory—but also acknowledge the oppor-



tunities that were denied to him, and through him, denied to generations of Indians.

Imagine a man who had lived through the caste oppression... who rose against all odds to earn multiple doctorates from the world’s top universities... who believed with all his heart that education is the ultimate tool of liberation. With his unmatched intellect, his deep grasp of the grassroots realities of Indian society, and his unwavering belief in the transformative power of learning, Ambedkar would have been the ideal architect of India’s post-independence education policy. He knew that true freedom was in-

complete without the education of the masses—especially the marginalized.

In 1947, India needed not just freedom—it needed direction. It needed someone who understood why millions of children couldn’t read, why girls weren’t in school, and why caste still chained the human mind. That someone was Dr. Ambedkar.

Had he been given charge of shaping India’s educational foundations, perhaps our schools would have been more inclusive, our textbooks more empowering, and our youth more awakened—sooner, stronger, freer.

Dr. Ambedkar once said, “Cultivation



Dr. Buragadda Srinadh
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of mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence.” His vision went beyond literacy—he wanted education that liberates, dignifies, and uplifts.

We honor his legacy, let us not just remember him as the chief architect of our Constitution, but also as the educationist India could have—and should have—fully embraced.

Let us commit ourselves to his dream: an India where every child, regardless of background, has the right to quality education—and a fair shot at dignity and opportunity. Instead, while he gave India its Constitution, his revolutionary vision for education remained largely unrealized in his lifetime. Had his ideas shaped the foundation of our schools and universities, India might have seen an earlier and deeper social awakening—an educational revolution that reached every village and every child, regardless of caste or class.

Congress’s Failure to Honor Dr. Ambedkar: A Nation’s Unfinished Acknowledgment

History will never forget that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar gave India its most powerful instrument of justice—the Constitution. Yet, it must also remember that the political establishment, particularly the Congress party, failed to fully honor him when it mattered most.

Despite his monumental intellect and unwavering commitment to the nation, Dr. Ambedkar was not given a cabinet portfolio befitting his vision

and capabilities. He was made Law Minister, yes—but not given charge of education, economy, or social justice—areas where his expertise was unmatched.

Even more telling is the fact that he was denied the Bharat Ratna during his lifetime. This highest civilian honor was awarded to him posthumously in 1990—34 years after his death—a delay that speaks volumes about how the ruling establishment undervalued his legacy during the early decades of independent India.

This wasn’t just a political slight—it was a failure to recognize a man who had dedicated his life to the upliftment of the most oppressed, to the building of institutions, and to the preservation of democratic values.

Ambedkar wasn’t just a Dalit icon—he was a national visionary. And if the Congress truly believed in equality, inclusion, and justice, it should have been the first to recognize his unmatched contributions in real time, not decades later when the public demand became too loud to ignore.

Today, India remembers Ambedkar not because he was honored by power—but because he empowered the voiceless. It’s a legacy far greater than any title or position—and one that history has finally begun to correct, even if too late.

Ambedkar’s Resignation speech: An important Testimony to Nehru’s narrow Vision

Pandit Nehru, while celebrated as a statesman, cannot be absolved of how Ambedkar was politically cornered and eventually pushed out of the cabinet. The Congress leadership’s discomfort with Ambedkar’s radical vision for caste annihilation, social equality, and educational reform created an environment where he was never fully supported—and often isolated.

Ambedkar wasn’t given the Education Ministry, despite being one of the most qualified individuals in the country—someone who had studied at Columbia and the London School of Economics, and who deeply understood India’s grassroots problems. Had Nehru truly wanted to transform India’s education system, Ambedkar was the obvious choice. He wasn’t chosen.



Himanta, Jeet Adani Discuss Assam Investment

In a significant follow-up to the Advantage Assam 2.0 business summit held in February, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma met with Jeet Adani, Director of the Adani Group, to discuss the operationalisation of the conglomerate’s massive Rs 50,000 crore investment proposal in the state. The meeting, which included senior state officials and members of the Adani leadership team, aimed to push forward projects in multiple sectors, including infrastructure, hospitality, aviation, and cement manufacturing.

Taking to social media platform X, the Chief Minister shared details of the discussion and expressed optimism about the investment commitment translating into tangible development soon. “During AdvantageAssam2, the Adani Group made a Rs 50,000 crore investment commitment. Today, along with my senior officers, we had an in-depth meeting with Mr Jeet Adani and his team to operationalise this commitment,” Sarma stated.

The state government is hopeful that the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed during the summit—covering the development of an aero-city, luxury hotels, a major cement plant, and various infrastructure projects—will be implemented without delay. These projects are expected to generate employment, boost economic activity, and enhance Assam’s status as an investment destination in the northeast.

The massive investment push by the Adani Group had originally been announced by Chairman Gautam Adani during the inaugural session of the summit. He had committed the funds towards building long-term assets and infrastructure in Assam, signalling the group’s intent to play a transformative role in the state’s economic growth.

The Assam government views this partnership as a game-changer for the region. By attracting private capital and global investors, initiatives like these are intended to turn Assam into a logistics and industrial hub in the eastern corridor of India. The meeting between Sarma and Jeet Adani comes at a time when the state is keen to leverage its geographic advantages and improve connectivity, tourism, and manufacturing.

As groundwork begins and formalities move ahead, the focus will be on translating commitments into on-ground execution that can deliver real economic benefits for the people of Assam.



Actor Vijay Joins Waqf Act Challenge

Tamil actor and Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) president Vijay has approached the Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, joining a growing list of petitioners from across the country who claim the law infringes upon fundamental rights. The amended legislation, passed by Parliament earlier this month and signed into law by President Droupadi Murmu on April 5, has triggered a wave of political and legal opposition.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, was passed in the Rajya Sabha on April 4 with 128 votes in favour and 95 against, following its clearance in the Lok Sabha, where 288 members supported it while 232 opposed. The law seeks to overhaul the management of waqf properties by enhancing administrative powers and introducing new mechanisms for survey, registration, and dispute resolution. However, critics argue that these changes centralize authority, facilitate undue government interference, and threaten the autonomy of Muslim religious endowments.

Actor Vijay’s entry into the legal battle adds a

new dimension to the growing controversy. As a popular figure in Tamil Nadu, his move is seen not just as a legal step but also as a political signal from his recently launched party, which has been positioning itself as a defender of constitutional rights and social justice.

Among others who have challenged the law in court are AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi, Congress MPs Mohammad Jawed and Imran Pratapgarhi, AAP’s Amanatullah Khan, and Azad Samaj Party leader Chandra Shekhar Azad. Several influential Muslim organizations such as the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), Jamiat Ulema-i-Hind, and Samastha Kerala Jamiatul Ulema have also voiced strong objections. They argue the amendments are arbitrary, discriminatory, and undermine community rights. Meanwhile, some groups have filed intervention applications in support of the Act, maintaining that it aligns with constitutional principles and does not violate any community’s rights. As the case unfolds, the Supreme Court’s verdict will be closely watched across legal, political, and religious spheres.

Governor’s ‘Jai Shri Ram’ Remark Sparks Row

Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi has once again stirred political controversy, this time for reportedly urging students to chant “Jai Shri Ram” during a recent event. The remark, made in an educational setting, has triggered strong reactions from opposition parties, academics, and civil society groups, who have accused the Governor of promoting religious slogans in violation of the Constitution’s secular framework. The State Platform for Common School System-Tamil Nadu (SPCSS-TN), a well-known academic advocacy group, issued a sharp statement condemning the Governor’s actions, asserting that he had clearly violated Article 159 of the Constitution, which mandates that a Governor uphold constitutional values without bias. The organisation called for his immediate removal, claiming that his encouragement of religious slogans in an official context breaches the secular duty of the office.

The political backlash was swift. Congress leader Sasikanth Senthil criticized the Governor, suggesting that his actions were calculated and meant to provoke



the State Government, especially in light of recent legal setbacks. “After being slammed by the Supreme Court and bypassed by the Tamil Nadu Government, the Governor is now resorting to these public stunts to stay relevant and spark outrage,” Senthil said in a social media post. The controversy follows closely on the heels of a major Supreme Court verdict that rebuked Governor Ravi for de-

laying assent to ten bills passed by the State Assembly. The Court ruled that the Governor’s actions were arbitrary and not in good faith, further instructing that the bills be treated as passed from the date they were re-submitted by the Assembly.

The Governor’s invocation of “Jai Shri Ram”—a slogan associated with political and religious movements—has reignited the broader debate over the constitutional role of Governors and the expectation of religious neutrality in public office. Critics argue that while personal beliefs are a right, promoting religious slogans in state functions or educational institutions crosses a line, especially in a diverse and secular country like India. As the issue escalates, political leaders and civil rights advocates continue to press for accountability, demanding that constitutional offices remain above partisan or religious messaging. The Raj Bhavan has not responded to the allegations yet, leaving the public and media awaiting clarification or official comment on the Governor’s controversial remarks.

Pastor John Jebaraj Held in POCSO Case

In a disturbing case that has shocked many, John Jebaraj, a pastor of Kings Generation Church in Coimbatore, was arrested in Kerala’s Munnar for allegedly sexually assaulting two minors. The 37-year-old, known for his significant social media following, had been absconding for months and was apprehended by the Central All Women Police Station, Coimbatore.

Jebaraj was arrested last evening and produced before a court earlier today, which remanded him to judicial custody. He faces serious charges under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, with specific sections pertaining to aggravated sexual assault invoked against him.

According to police sources, the incidents in question took place during a party hosted by Jebaraj at his residence in Coimbatore in May last year. One of the survivors reportedly revealed the traumatic



experience to a family member recently, prompting a formal complaint to be filed with the Central All Women Police Station.

Acting on the complaint, the Coimbatore City Police formed multiple special teams to track down Jebaraj, who had been evading arrest. A lookout circular was also issued to prevent him from fleeing the country. His arrest was finally made possible after investigators traced his movements to Munnar, where he was taken

into custody without incident.

A senior police official confirmed that a minor girl had lodged a complaint with the Child Welfare Committee, and further investigations are ongoing. “We are gathering all evidence and testimonies related to the case. More details may emerge as the investigation progresses,” the officer said.

The incident has drawn widespread condemnation, with renewed calls for stringent enforcement of child protection laws and greater oversight of individuals in influential positions. The arrest comes on the heels of another high-profile case involving Pastor Bajinder Singh in Punjab, who was recently sentenced to life imprisonment for rape.

The case against Jebaraj is expected to unfold over the coming weeks, with police urging any other potential victims to come forward.

Waqf Act Sparks Unrest in States

The recent amendments to the Waqf Act, 2025, have sparked widespread protests across India, with Kerala and West Bengal emerging as major flashpoints. In Kerala, the unrest was led by the Solidarity Youth Movement and the Students Islamic Organisation of India (SIO), both affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami. Demonstrations reached a peak on April 9 near Karippur Airport in Kozhikode, where protesters displayed controversial images of Islamist figures, including leaders of Hamas and ideologues like Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb. These visuals drew strong criticism from the BJP, which accused the groups of promoting extremist ideologies under the guise of protest. Responding to the outrage, Kerala Police launched investigations into the incident, as political tensions heightened.

Meanwhile, West Bengal witnessed more intense and violent demonstrations, particularly in Murshidabad district. Clashes erupted in towns such as Suti, Samserganj, and Jangipur, leading to the deaths of at least three individuals and injuries to several others, including police officers. Protesters vandalized public property, set vehicles on fire, and disrupted railway operations by blocking tracks and pelt-

ing stones at trains. In response, the Calcutta High Court directed the deployment of central forces to curb the violence and restore order. Authorities also arrested over 130 individuals in connection with the unrest.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee responded firmly, stating that the Waqf (Amendment) Act will not be implemented in West Bengal. She appealed for peace and warned political actors against exploiting the issue to fuel communal tension. On the other hand, BJP leaders condemned the state government’s handling of the crisis, accusing it of being lenient on those responsible for the violence.

The ongoing protests reflect the deep unease and opposition among sections of the Muslim community, who view the amendments as a threat to the autonomy and integrity of Waqf properties. The developments in both Kerala and West Bengal underscore the growing challenge for the central and state governments to address minority concerns while maintaining law and order. As the protests continue, the political and social ramifications of the amended Waqf Act are expected to remain a contentious issue in the months ahead.



Russian missile attack on Ukraine’s Sumy: More than 30 people killed, at least 84 injured

- Missiles reportedly used cluster munitions for maximum damage.
- Sumy, near Russian border, seen as key military zone.
- Ukraine shares evidence with ICC; war crimes probe underway.



TPN Correspondent | [Ukraine](#)

In the deadliest strike on Ukraine this year, two Russian ballistic missiles devastated the northern city of Sumy on Sunday, killing at least 32 people and injuring over 80, according to Ukrainian officials. The brutal attack, which occurred on Palm Sunday, drew widespread condemnation from Ukrainian leaders and prompted fresh calls for international action against Moscow.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy posted a harrowing video on social media showing bodies lying on the street near a charred bus and destroyed cars. “Only scoundrels can act like this. Taking the lives of ordinary people,” Zelenskyy said, adding that the strike targeted civilians on a religious holiday when many were heading to church.

The Russian government has not issued a statement regarding the attack, and Reuters noted that no immediate response was received from Russian authorities.

Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said the missiles struck a busy street where people were out in vehicles, on foot, or in nearby buildings. He labeled it a “deliberate destruction of civilians” on a day of religious significance. Zelenskyy’s chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, revealed that

the missiles used in the attack contained cluster munitions, further indicating a deadly intent to cause maximum civilian casualties.

Sumy, a city of around 250,000 people located just 25 kilometers from the Russian border, has previously been a military hub for Ukrainian operations. Though Kyiv’s cross-border offensives into Russia last year were largely repelled, the region remains a sensitive target.

Maryana Bezuhla, a Ukrainian lawmaker known for her candid criticism of the military leadership, suggested on Telegram that the strike may have followed a leak regarding a potential troop gathering in the area. However, this claim remains unverified.

This attack comes just weeks after another missile strike on Kryvyi Rih—Zelenskyy’s hometown—that killed 20 people, including nine children.

Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha confirmed that Kyiv is sharing detailed evidence of the strike with international partners and institutions. The International Criminal Court in The Hague, which Ukraine joined officially this year, is currently investigating such incidents as potential war crimes under international law.

Elon Musk's 'Top Secret' Note Sparks Buzz at White House Meeting with Trump



TPN Correspondent | [Washington](#)

A seemingly ordinary notepad with a cheeky message scribbled on it has sparked viral speculation after being spotted during a high-level cabinet meeting at the White House. The image in question shows tech billionaire Elon Musk seated with a name card bearing his name, a White House-branded notepad, and the words “Top Secret” written in bold blue ink—underlined twice and punctuated with two exclamation points.

Captured during an April 10 meeting led by U.S. President Donald Trump, the image quickly circulated on social media, drawing widespread amusement and theories about Musk’s intentions. Users on platform X (formerly Twitter) were quick to speculate whether it was a genuine leak or just another one of Musk’s signature pranks.

“Elon knows the games the media plays, so he decided to mess with them by writing ‘Top Secret’ on his notepad, knowing they’d be snapping pics,” one user posted alongside the viral image. Musk himself responded with a laughing emoji, seemingly confirming the note was a light-hearted jab.

The internet erupted with reactions. “Elon is such a troll and I love him for it,” wrote one user. Another added, “Oh, Elon... forever the class clown in a room full of serious faces. It’s like he brought invisible ink to a spy convention.” Someone even joked, “The last page in the notepad should say ‘Bottom Secret’...”

While the viral moment drew plenty of laughs, the cabinet meeting itself had serious undertones. It was convened amid Trump’s recent announcement of sweeping tariffs on over 60 nations and trading blocs, a move expected to have significant economic repercussions.

Musk, who now serves as the head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), presented a bold projection during the meeting—claiming that his department is on track to save the U.S. government \$150 billion in fiscal year 2026 by curbing fraud and improving operational efficiency.

However, reports suggest that Musk may soon step back from his formal role at DOGE. According to Politico, Trump and Musk have discussed a possible transition, with Musk potentially continuing in an informal advisory capacity while refocusing on his core businesses like Tesla, SpaceX, and X.

As always, Musk’s presence—whether through policy or pranks—continues to leave a mark on Washington.

Zelenskyy Condemns ‘Filthy Scum’ Putin After Deadly Missile Strike

TPN Correspondent | [Russia](#)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy launched a scathing condemnation of Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday, calling him a “filthy scum” following a brutal ballistic missile strike that killed at least 31 people in the northern Ukrainian city of Sumy. The attack, which occurred on Palm Sunday, targeted residential areas, schools, and public roads at a time when residents were attending church services.

Among the dead were two children, and over 84 others were injured, including at least 10 children, making it the deadliest assault on Ukrainian civilians since 2023. The missiles slammed into civilian zones, obliterating homes, damaging educational institutions, and leaving scenes of horror on what was supposed to be a day of peace and worship.

Zelenskyy shared a video of the aftermath on X (formerly Twitter), showing bodies lying near destroyed vehicles and burning buildings. “A horrific Russian ballistic missile strike on Sumy. Russian missiles hit an ordinary city street, ordinary life – residential buildings, educational insti-



tutions, cars on the street... And that’s on the day when people go to church – Palm Sunday,” Zelenskyy wrote.

“According to preliminary information, dozens of civilians were killed and wounded. Only filthy scum can act like this – taking the lives of ordinary people,” he added, expressing his condolences to the victims’ families and calling for a firm global response. The Ukrainian president urged the international community, including

the United States and European nations, to step up pressure on Russia, emphasizing that peace cannot be achieved through diplomacy alone when missiles continue to fall.

“The world must respond firmly,” Zelenskyy said. “Russia wants exactly this kind of terror and is dragging this war out. Without pressure on Russia, peace is impossible... Talks have never stopped ballistic missiles and aerial bombs.”

He thanked Ukraine’s allies for their continued support and emphasized the need to defend life and sovereignty.

Ukraine’s Foreign Minister, Andrii Sybiha, also confirmed that Russia has once again rejected a U.S.-backed ceasefire proposal, marking the second consecutive month of refusal amid escalating civilian casualties.

As rescue operations continue in Sumy, Ukrainian authorities are sharing evidence with international partners, seeking justice through the International Criminal Court and stronger global sanctions against Russia’s aggressive campaign.

"Leave Now": A 30-Day Warning For Foreign Nationals Staying In US

TPN Correspondent | [US](#)

In a dramatic escalation of immigration enforcement, the Donald Trump administration has issued a stern warning to foreign nationals living illegally in the United States, urging them to self-deport or face stiff penalties, including jail time. The announcement, made via an official post by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on social media, marks one of the most aggressive crackdowns yet on undocumented immigrants. According to the new directive, all foreign nationals present in the U.S. for longer than 30 days must register with federal authorities. Failure to do so constitutes a criminal offense, punishable by fines and imprisonment. “Foreign nationals present in the U.S. longer than 30 days must register with the federal government. Failure to comply is a crime punishable by fines and imprisonment,” the DHS post stated. It also tagged President Donald Trump and Krishi Noem, the current Secretary of Homeland Security, making the administration’s position unmistakably clear: “Illegal aliens: LEAVE NOW and self-deport.” While the new policy does not imme-



diately impact individuals on legal visas such as H-1B workers or students, it underscores heightened scrutiny for all foreign nationals, especially those who overstay or fall out of status. For example, individuals on H-1B visas who lose employment and do not depart within the grace period could now face legal consequences.

The DHS’s announcement includes a detailed list of what it describes as the benefits of voluntary departure. “Self-deportation is safe,” the post reads. “Leave on your own terms by picking your departure flight. Keep money earned in the U.S. if you self-deport as a non-criminal illegal alien.” Moreover, the department claims that self-deporting individuals may remain eligible for future legal immigration pathways and even qualify for subsidized flights if they cannot afford to leave on their own. On the flip side, the consequences for ignoring these guidelines are severe. Illegal residents who stay after receiving a final removal order could be fined \$998 per day. Those who commit to self-deportation but fail to follow through could face additional fines of \$1,000–\$5,000, along with possible imprisonment. Additionally, non-compliant individuals may be permanently barred from re-entering the U.S. legally. The message is unambiguous: the Trump administration is doubling down on immigration enforcement and signaling a zero-tolerance policy for unauthorized stay.

India's Electronics Exports Gain 20% Advantage Over China Due to U.S. Tariff Exemption

Exports of smartphones, tablets, and laptops from India to the United States are set to become 20% cheaper compared to products shipped from China, thanks to recent tariff exemptions granted by the Trump administration. The U.S. government announced on April 12, 2025, that it would exempt certain electronic devices, including smartphones, tablets, and laptops, from new reciprocal tariffs, easing the financial burden on exporters.

According to the India Cellular and Electronics Association

(ICEA), this move levels the playing field between India and Vietnam, both of which now enjoy zero tariffs on electronics exports to the U.S. India's tariff advantage over China could be crucial for companies like Apple, which has seen significant growth in exports from India, with mobile phone exports crossing ₹2 lakh crore in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

ICEA Chairman Pankaj Mohindroo emphasized that while China still faces tariffs on 20% of products like iPhones, laptops, and tablets, India is



well-positioned to benefit from the U.S. exemption. Apple's iPhone exports from India alone reached ₹1.5 lakh crore in 2024.

This move is expected to further boost India's position as a key player in the global electronics supply chain.

The Trump administration's decision also includes exemptions for items like flat-panel monitors and hard drives, which will now avoid the steep 145% tariffs that were previously imposed on China. These exemptions come as a relief to manufacturers facing challenges from ongoing trade tensions. Industry experts like Ashok Chandak, President of the Indian Electronics and

Semiconductor Association (IESA), view the U.S. tariff exemptions as a short-term reprieve for global tech manufacturers. However, the shift in trade policy could prompt long-term opportunities for India to become a preferred alternative to China, especially as U.S. imports of electronics continue to grow. With India's electronics export potential still significantly untapped, the sector is poised for substantial growth, leveraging the tariff advantage to gain a stronger foothold in the global market.

Amazon-backed More Retail plans India IPO next year, betting on its hybrid model

In a major cost-cutting move, U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has ordered the immediate termination of multiple IT services contracts worth a combined \$5.1 billion. The contracts, held by major consulting firms including Accenture and Deloitte, were deemed by the Pentagon to be non-essential expenditures.

The directive, outlined in a memo dated April 10 and released publicly on April 11, 2025, highlights a shift in the Department of Defense's approach to outsourcing and consultant dependency. Hegseth stated that the terminated contracts "represent non-essential spending on third-party consultants" for tasks that could be performed internally by Pentagon personnel.

"These terminations represent \$5.1 billion in wasteful spending... and nearly \$4 billion in estimated savings," the memo read. It marks one of the largest single cost-cutting actions taken under Hegseth's leadership.

The decision comes amid increasing scrutiny over defense budget allocations and growing calls from lawmakers and watchdog groups to reduce reliance on costly external contractors



for services that do not directly support military readiness or operations.

According to defense officials, many of the cancelled contracts were for IT consulting, project management, and digital transformation services. While these services have been used to modernize various systems, Hegseth argued that the Pentagon has sufficient in-house capability to manage the majority of these functions.

Sources within the Defense Department say the review leading up to the cancellations was part of a broader audit launched earlier this year, aimed at identifying redundancies and inefficiencies in defense spending. Industry groups and affected contractors have yet to issue formal responses,

but analysts predict significant pushback, particularly from firms that stand to lose long-term federal revenue streams. The decision could also impact the private defense consulting market, which has grown substantially in recent years.

Hegseth, who has championed greater efficiency and accountability within the department, emphasized in the memo that funds saved from these terminated contracts would be redirected toward core defense initiatives and modernization programs that directly enhance national security. The move is expected to generate both praise and criticism as debates continue around defense budgeting, fiscal responsibility, and the role of private contractors in U.S. military operations.



Gold Hits Record High of \$3,237 as Economic Fears, Trade War Drive Investor Rush

Gold prices surged over 6.5% this week, hitting an all-time high of \$3,237 per troy ounce, as investors sought refuge amid escalating global economic uncertainty. The sharp rally marks the metal's strongest weekly gain since the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, with analysts linking the move to heightened fears of a recession and a rapidly intensifying US-China trade war.

The spike in gold came after President Donald Trump introduced sweeping new tariffs, triggering a significant market sell-off. China retaliated on Friday with a 125% tariff on American imports, stoking fears of a prolonged and damaging trade conflict. As a result, traditional safe-haven assets such as US Treasury bonds and stocks witnessed steep declines, while the US dollar weakened to a three-year low against the euro — further boosting gold's appeal.

"Gold is behaving exactly as a safe-haven should in times of deep market anxiety," said a senior analyst at GlobalCom Finance. "Investors are seeking shelter from rising bond yields, inflation uncertainty, and geopolitical turmoil."

Demand isn't just rising among retail investors. Institutional interest in gold has surged, with gold-backed ETFs seeing their biggest quarterly inflows since 2020. Meanwhile, central banks, particularly in emerging economies, have accelerated their gold purchases in an effort to diversify away from the US dollar and safeguard reserves.

In China, demand has become so intense that domestic buyers are paying a premium over global market prices, reflecting widespread concern over financial instability and currency volatility in the region.

In response to this dramatic shift, Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) has revised its 12-month gold price forecast upward to \$3,500 per ounce — the second upward revision this year. UBS cited the unpredictable nature of US trade policy and persistent macroeconomic risks as key drivers for their bullish outlook. As uncertainty continues to cloud global financial markets, analysts suggest that investors will likely continue turning to gold as a hedge, with prices potentially rising even further if tensions and economic headwinds worsen in the months ahead.

India's Factory Output Growth Slows to Six-Month Low of 2.9% in February

India's industrial activity lost momentum in February 2025, with factory output growth dropping to a six-month low of 2.9%, according to data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on Friday. The slowdown was attributed largely to a high base effect and weakening performance across key sectors, including manufacturing, mining, and consumer goods.

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP), a key measure of industrial activity, had recorded stronger growth of 5.2% in January 2025 and 5.6% in February 2024. The latest figures mark a notable deceleration in the pace of industrial expansion, raising concerns about the strength of India's economic recovery amid global uncertainties and tightening financial conditions.

Manufacturing, which constitutes

nearly 78% of the IIP, mirrored the broader trend with its output growth also slipping to 2.9%—a sharp drop from 5.8% in January and 4.9% in the same period last year. The mining sector saw a steeper decline, registering just 1.6% growth compared to 4.4% in the previous month and 8.1% in February 2024.

The data also pointed to lackluster performance in the consumer goods segment, with subdued demand potentially impacting production volumes. Analysts say that while inflationary pressures have eased slightly, consumption remains uneven, especially in rural areas.

Experts noted that the slowdown, although partly due to a statistical base effect from last year's strong growth, reflects underlying softness in domestic

industrial activity. "The dip in February's IIP growth reinforces the need for policy support, especially as global demand weakens and exports remain under pressure," said an economist at a leading investment firm.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has so far maintained a cautious stance, balancing the need to control inflation with the risk of stifling growth. With inflation appearing relatively contained and factory output showing signs of fatigue, pressure may mount on the central bank to consider easing its monetary policy stance later this year. Going forward, economists expect industrial growth to remain moderate in the short term, contingent on revival in domestic demand, government spending on infrastructure, and global economic stability.

Credit-Fueled Digital Payments Surge in 2024 Amid Regulatory Concerns

Nearly one-third of all domestic digital payment transactions in India during 2024 were driven by credit, either through credit cards or interest-bearing EMIs (equated monthly instalments), according to a recent report analyzing data from over 20,000 merchants. This sharp rise in credit-backed transactions reflects shifting consumer behavior, with more individuals relying on borrowed funds for day-to-day consumption.

The findings arrive as financial regulators tighten scrutiny on consumer lending, aiming to prevent an unsustainable buildup of household debt. Concerns have grown that credit is increasingly being used to finance consumption—such as dining, fashion, and electronics purchases—rather than investment in long-term assets like homes or education.



Digital payment platforms, online retailers, and fintechs have all contributed to the surge by offering seamless credit options during checkout,

making it easier for consumers to opt for 'buy now, pay later' models or EMI conversions. This has especially resonated with India's younger population, many of whom are entering credit markets for the first time and using it to support lifestyle-driven purchases.

Industry experts caution that while credit expansion can support economic growth in the short term, unchecked borrowing without corresponding asset creation could pose long-term financial stability risks. "The growing trend of using credit for non-essential purchases is worrying, especially in the absence of strong financial literacy," one expert noted.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has already taken steps to rein in unsecured lending, introducing stricter norms for non-banking financial companies

(NBFCs) and digital lenders. These measures include higher capital requirements and more transparency in EMI-based products.

At the same time, the demand for credit remains robust, with consumer sentiment buoyed by rising incomes and improved access to credit through digital channels.

The report suggests that financial institutions and regulators must strike a balance—encouraging digital innovation and credit access while ensuring borrowers are protected from over-indebtedness.

As India continues its transition to a cashless economy, the rapid rise in credit-linked digital payments underlines both the opportunities and the emerging risks in the evolving fintech landscape.

Girl Found in Suitcase at Haryana Hostel



A bizarre and now-viral incident at OP Jindal Global University has sparked widespread discussion after a student was caught attempting to sneak a girl into the boys’ hostel by hiding her inside a suitcase. The incident occurred earlier this week and quickly gained traction online after footage of the dramatic discovery was shared across social media platforms. In the video, hostel security personnel—both male and female—can be seen gath-

ered around a large black suitcase in the corridor of the hostel. Moments later, a female security guard unzips the suitcase, revealing a girl curled up inside. The video, which has gone viral under tags like #HostelDrama and #SuitcaseSneakIn, has prompted reactions ranging from shock to amusement. Many social media users called out the bizarre lengths students go to by-pass hostel rules, while others raised concerns about campus security and

the broader implications of such behavior. According to reports, the boy, a resident of the boys’ hostel, was attempting to sneak the girl in without attracting attention. University officials have confirmed that both students involved are currently under inquiry. In response to the incident, OP Jindal Global University issued a brief statement acknowledging the breach of hostel rules and assuring that appropriate disciplinary action would

Outrage Over Couple’s PDA at Metro Station

Bengaluru: A video showing a young couple engaging in inappropriate behavior at Madavara Metro Station has sparked a wave of outrage online, reigniting debate around public decency and conduct in shared spaces. The incident, captured on video by a fellow commuter, shows the couple involved in an explicit public display of affection (PDA) while waiting on the metro platform. Shared by the handle ‘Karnataka Portfolio’ on social media platform X, the video has since gone viral, crossing 3.3 lakh views and attracting a barrage of critical comments. What shocked viewers even more was the setting: the couple’s actions unfolded in full view of other passengers, including senior citizens and families, some of whom appeared visibly disturbed by the scene. Despite

the presence of a crowd, the couple reportedly showed no signs of stopping or acknowledging the discomfort of others around them. The video was captioned, “Is Bengaluru heading towards Delhi Metro culture??? Disturbing public behaviour at Namma Metro station raises questions about decency in Bengaluru.” It ignited heated discussion online, with many users urging Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRL) and law enforcement to take appropriate action. In India, PDA continues to be a contentious subject. While some argue for the right to personal expression, many others believe there are boundaries that should not be crossed in public spaces — especially places like metro stations which serve a diverse commuter population.



Metro authorities have not issued a formal response yet, but sources indicate that security footage is being reviewed and action could follow under rules governing public conduct in transport facilities. Social commentators have also weighed in, pointing to the growing influence of social media and changing cultural norms, while stressing the importance of awareness, respect, and responsibility in public settings.

Florida Woman Arrested for Selling Human Bones

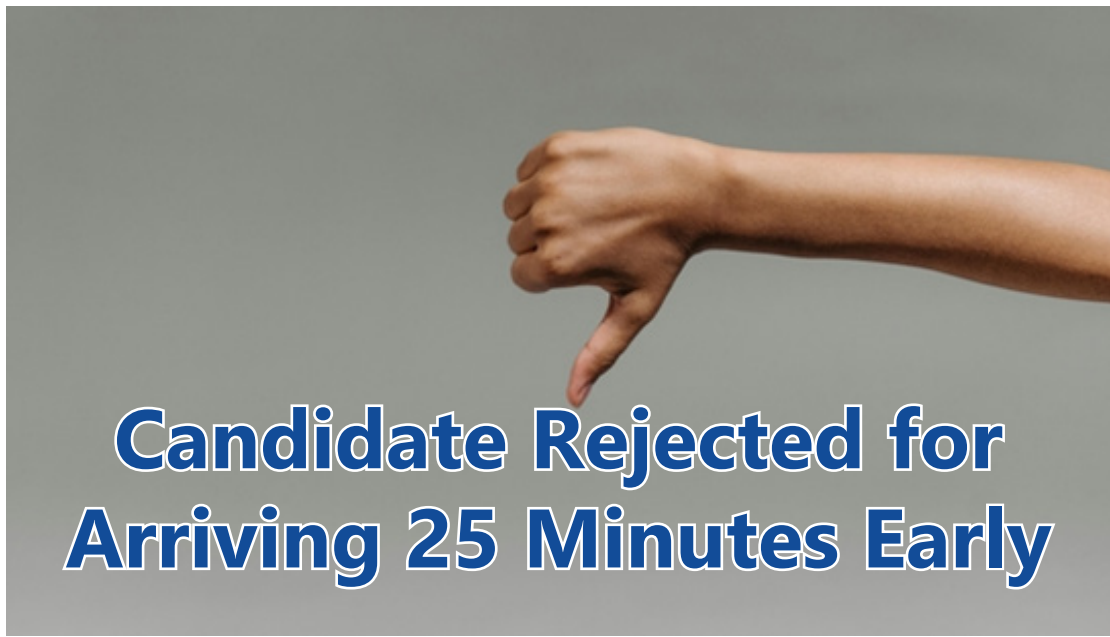


Deltona, Florida: A 52-year-old woman from Florida has been arrested for selling human body parts on Facebook Marketplace. Kymberlee Anne Schopper, a resident of Deltona, was charged with trading in human tissue and released on a \$7,500 bond after her arrest. The investigation began when Orange City police received a tip in December 2023 about a local business selling human bones through the platform. Authorities discovered that the business, called Wicked Wonderland, had been advertising human body

parts for sale. Items included two human skulls priced at \$90 each, along with other remains such as a human clavicle, scapula, rib, and vertebrae, ranging from \$35 to \$600. Upon investigation, police seized the human remains and sent them for testing by a medical examiner. Experts determined that some of the items, including a cranium and skull fragment, were likely archaeological discoveries rather than modern human remains. However, selling human body parts without proper permits or docu-

mentation is still illegal. When questioned about the sale, Schopper claimed she had been selling the body parts for years and did not realize it was illegal to do so. The case highlights the growing concern over illegal sales of human remains, with platforms like Facebook Marketplace becoming an unintended marketplace for such items. Authorities are continuing their investigation to determine the source of the remains and whether there are other individuals involved in the illegal trade.

Candidate Rejected for Arriving 25 Minutes Early



Atlanta: A candidate’s decision to arrive 25 minutes early for a job interview led to their unexpected rejection, as the employer deemed the early arrival a sign of poor time management and social awareness. The incident, which has sparked widespread debate, was shared in a viral LinkedIn post by Matthew Prewett, a cleaning service owner in Atlanta. Prewett explained that the candidate was applying for an office administrator position and showed up far ahead of the scheduled interview time. “I had a candidate show up 25 minutes early to an interview last week. That was a major deciding factor in why I didn’t hire him,” Prewett wrote. This seemingly minor mistake quickly gained attention online, prompting discussions about the appropriate arrival time for job interviews. Many believe that being too early can be just as problematic as be-

ing late, especially in professional settings. Following the backlash, Prewett clarified his stance, explaining that while punctuality is important, arriving excessively early can suggest poor time management or an expectation of special accommodation. “Showing up early is good. Showing up extremely early can suggest that someone is not good with time management or expects to be accommodated time-wise,” Prewett added. He further noted that the candidate was not traveling from a great distance, which made the early arrival seem even more problematic. The story has sparked a wider conversation on social awareness and the nuances of punctuality. While the majority of job seekers focus on avoiding tardiness, this case highlights how even a well-intentioned act of arriving early can be perceived negatively in certain professional contexts.

Man Launches ‘Relationship Insurance’ Policy, Sparks Debate

In an unexpected and quirky twist, a new concept has gone viral: relationship insurance. A man has introduced the world’s first relationship insurance policy, leaving social media users divided over its merit. The video announcing this bold move has gained significant attention, with many questioning whether this is a creative marketing strategy or a cynical approach to love. The website Zikilove is at the heart of the initiative, offering couples an insurance policy aimed at betting on the longevi-

ty of their relationship. The plan promises a unique payout for those whose relationships last. According to the website, couples who manage to stay together for the duration of the insurance term will receive a substantial reward—ten times their total premiums—which they can use to fund their wedding. However, the policy also comes with a catch: if the couple breaks up, they receive nothing—just the life experience and emotional damage from their failed relationship. The concept has sparked wide-



spread debate online. Some netizens view it as a fun and novel way to encourage commitment and lasting love, while others see it as a mercenary approach to a deeply personal aspect of life. Critics argue that it reduces the sanctity of relationships to a financial transaction, while others have simply found it amusing and curious.

NASA Offers \$3 Million for Space Waste Solution



NASA is offering a \$3 million reward for innovative solutions to a pressing challenge in space exploration: recycling human waste. As part of the LunaRecycle Challenge, NASA is calling on global innovators to develop technology that will allow astronauts to recycle feces and urine during long-duration space missions, including those to the Moon and Mars. The space agency is actively preparing for missions that will send humans far beyond Earth, and managing waste in space has become a critical concern. NASA’s goal is to minimize space waste, recycle it efficiently, and ensure astronauts can sustain

themselves on long trips without needing to bring back large amounts of waste to Earth. “NASA is committed to sustainable space exploration. As we prepare for future human space missions, there will be a need to consider how various waste streams, including solid waste, can be minimized — as well as how waste can be stored, processed, and recycled in a space environment so that little or no waste will need to be returned to Earth,” the agency stated. The LunaRecycle Challenge is a two-phase competition aimed at developing the best waste recycling technology. The technology will need to ensure that human

waste is processed in a way that doesn’t add to the space debris and is sustainable for long missions. This issue is not new to NASA; during the Apollo 11 mission, astronauts left 96 bags of human waste on the Moon to make room for valuable lunar samples. With future missions planning to stay longer and travel farther, solutions like waste recycling will play a vital role in supporting astronauts’ needs in space. As NASA continues to prepare for its next phases of space exploration, it is looking for groundbreaking ideas that will help create a cleaner and more sustainable space environment.

Madhya Pradesh, Punjab Secure Spots in Final of 15th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2025



Hockey Madhya Pradesh and Hockey Punjab secured their places in the final of the 15th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship 2025 after winning their respective semi-final matches in

Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh. In the first semi-final, Hockey Madhya Pradesh triumphed over Manipur Hockey with a 5-3 victory. Captain Yousuf Affan (5', 34') and Ali Ahmad (7', 15') scored braces, while Mohammad

Zaid Khan (49') added another goal. Moirangthem Rabichandra Singh (47'), Chinglensana Singh Kangujam (50'), and Laishram Dipu Singh (53') scored for Manipur. In the second semi-final, Hockey Punjab edged out Uttar Pradesh Hockey 4-3 in a thrilling match. Jasjit Singh Kular (14', 40') netted a brace, with Harjeet Singh (22') and Jugraj Singh (45') also on the scoresheet. Sharda Nand Tiwari (41', 43') and Pawan Rajbhar scored for Uttar Pradesh, but they couldn't equalize in the final moments. Both teams now stand one win away from lifting the prestigious title.

Mumbai Indians Beat Delhi Capitals in High-Scoring IPL Clash



In a thrilling encounter at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on April 13, 2025, Mumbai Indians (MI) defeated Delhi Capitals (DC) by 12 runs in Match 29 of the IPL 2025 season. Opting to bat first, MI put up a commanding total of 205/5, with explosive contributions from their top order. The middle overs saw calculated aggression, helping them set a daunting target. Chasing 206, DC got off to a promising start but lost crucial wickets at regular

intervals. Despite a fighting half-century from their skipper, the Capitals fell short, being bowled out for 193 in 19 overs. MI's bowlers held their nerve in the final overs, sealing a much-needed win. This victory lifts Mumbai's morale and keeps their playoff hopes alive. For Delhi, the loss adds pressure as the tournament enters a crucial phase. The match was a perfect display of power-hitting and tense finishes—classic IPL drama.



IPL 2025: Salt, Kohli Guide RCB to 9-Wicket Rout Over Rajasthan Royals



Phil Salt's explosive 65 off 33 balls and Virat Kohli's composed 62 powered Royal Challengers Bengaluru to a thumping 9-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals at Sawai Mansingh Stadium. Chasing 174, Salt's fiery knock, featuring six sixes, gave RCB early momentum, while Kohli anchored the chase with his 100th T20 fifty, guiding RCB home in just 17.3 overs. The duo shared a 92-run opening stand, with 65 runs coming in the powerplay.

Earlier, Yashasvi Jaiswal top-scored for RR with 75 off 47 balls, crafting a resilient knock on a tricky pitch. Despite a useful cameo from Dhruv Jurel (35), RR posted 173/4. RCB bowlers, led by Hazlewood and Pandya, kept things tight in the middle overs. RCB's fourth win of the season—all away—keeps their playoff hopes alive. Kohli now boasts 100 T20 fifties and 9 centuries from 405 matches.

Amorim Drops Under-Fire Andre Onana for Manchester United's Premier League Clash Against Newcastle

Manchester United goalkeeper Andre Onana has been dropped for the upcoming Premier League match against Newcastle United, following a turbulent period marked by errors and personal challenges. According to Sky Sports, Onana, who has played every minute of the league season since joining Old Trafford in 2023, will be replaced by Altay Bayindir. This will be Bayindir's Premier League debut after just six appearances this season. Onana's omission comes after two crucial errors in Manchester United's 2-2 draw against Lyon in the UEFA Europa League quarter-final. His mistakes, including failing to save a free-kick and misjudging a parried shot leading to an equalizer, left United frustrated. Additionally, Onana's wife experienced a traumatic robbery in Manchester in March, which may have contributed to his recent struggles. Manager Ruben Amorim has opted for Onana's rest, with the hope of a potential recall for the second leg against Lyon. Onana's recent comments before the



Lyon match, in which he claimed United was "better," have also added to the pressure, with former player Nemanja Matic criticising his performances.

Indian Compound Mixed Team Wins Gold at Archery World Cup Stage 1

India's Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Rishabh Yadav secured the gold medal in the compound mixed team event at the Archery World Cup Stage 1. The duo defeated Chinese Taipei's Huang I-Jou and Chen Chieh-Lun in a thrilling final with a score of 153-151. After trailing in the first two sets (37-38 and 38-39), the Indian pair made a remarkable comeback, winning the third set 39-38 with two 10s and an inner 10. They sealed the victory with a dominant 39-36 in the fourth set. This victory came after India secured a third medal in the competition, following a victory over Slovenia in the earlier rounds. The mixed team's success is significant as compound archery was recently added to the

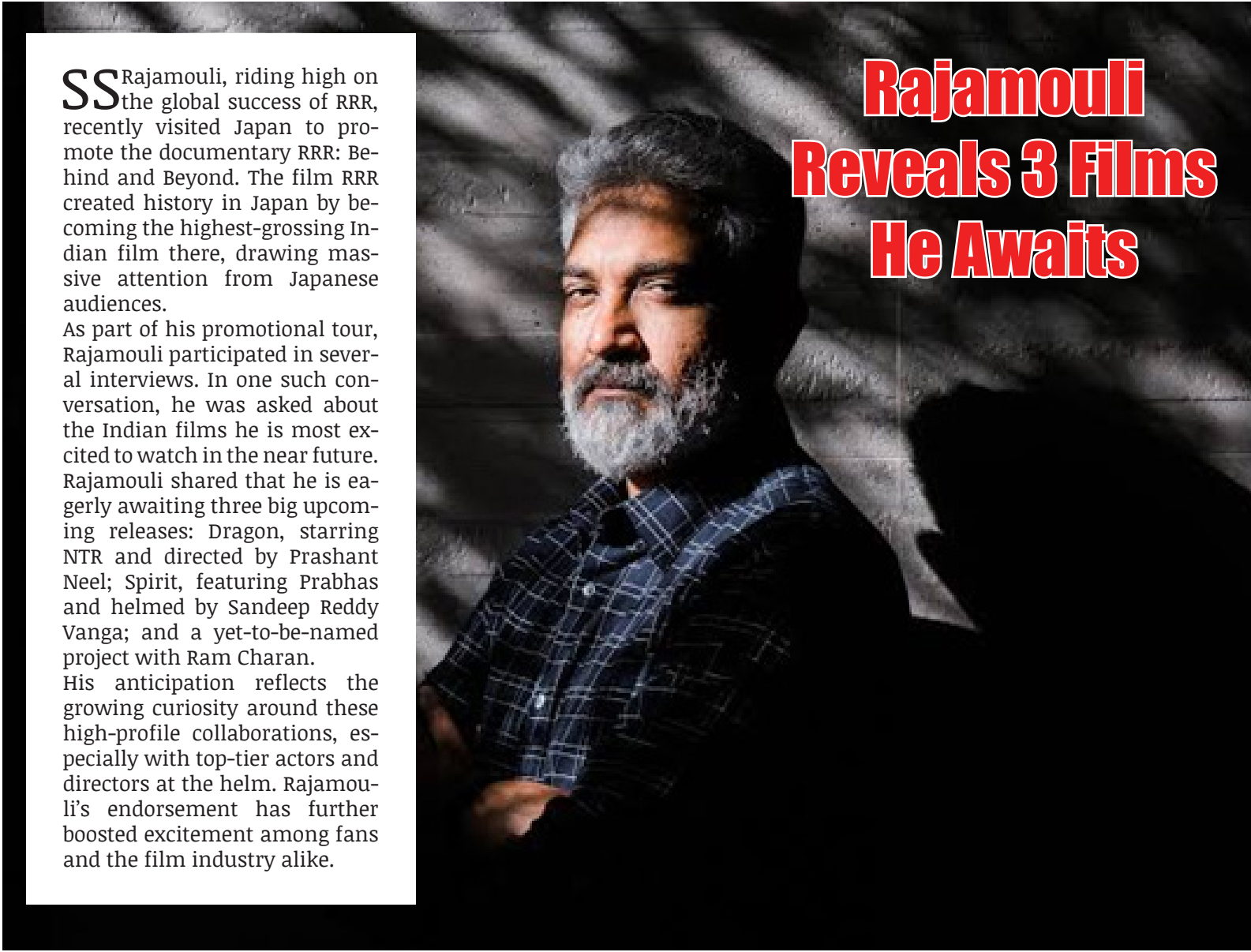
2028 Los Angeles Olympics programme. Jyothi and Rishabh had previously beaten Spain (156-149), Denmark (156-154), and Slovenia (159-155) to reach the final, cementing their spot in archery history.



Shrivalli, Ankita, and Prarthana Create History as India Qualifies for Billie Jean King Cup Playoffs 2025

Team India made history by qualifying for the Billie Jean King Cup 2025 playoffs, securing second place in the Asia-Oceania Group 1. India advanced to the next round with a 2-1 victory against Korea Republic in their final match of the tournament at the Mahalunge Balewadi Tennis Complex in Pune on Saturday. This achievement marks only the second time India has reached the playoffs of the prestigious competition, with

their first qualification coming in 2020. Shrivalli, Ankita, and Prarthana played key roles in this remarkable success, with the trio delivering stellar performances to seal the win for the hosts. Alongside India, New Zealand claimed the top spot in the tournament, which was organized by MSLTA in partnership with ITF, AITA, and PMDTA. India's qualification sets them up for a strong challenge in the upcoming playoffs.



Rajamouli Reveals 3 Films He Awaits

SSRajamouli, riding high on the global success of RRR, recently visited Japan to promote the documentary RRR: Behind and Beyond. The film RRR created history in Japan by becoming the highest-grossing Indian film there, drawing massive attention from Japanese audiences. As part of his promotional tour, Rajamouli participated in several interviews. In one such conversation, he was asked about the Indian films he is most excited to watch in the near future. Rajamouli shared that he is eagerly awaiting three big upcoming releases: Dragon, starring NTR and directed by Prashant Neel; Spirit, featuring Prabhas and helmed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga; and a yet-to-be-named project with Ram Charan. His anticipation reflects the growing curiosity around these high-profile collaborations, especially with top-tier actors and directors at the helm. Rajamouli's endorsement has further boosted excitement among fans and the film industry alike.



Vizag's Rise as Tollywood Hub?

Bheemili MLA Ganta Srinivas Rao has revealed that the Andhra Pradesh government is working toward making Visakhapatnam a major hub for film production. During his visit to the Film Nagar Cultural Centre site in Thimmapuram on Saturday, he said the centre would not only serve as a social club but also function as a training ground for aspiring film technicians. He noted that several filmmakers and producers are showing growing interest in Vizag, with star producer Allu Aravind reportedly considering setting up a studio in the city. Ganta also addressed a controversy surrounding club management, criticizing rules that allow committee members' family members to automatically become successors—a practice not seen in other old clubs like Waltair or Golf Club. He further shared that the original 10-acre site at Thotlakonda was reclaimed due to objections from the Archaeology Department, but discussions are underway with CM Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan to find an alternative location.

Kashika Kapoor's Bold Casting Couch Reveal



Young actress Kashika Kapoor, who debuted in 2024 with Ayushmati Geeta Metric Pass, has opened up about a disturbing casting couch experience in the film industry. Despite having no film background, she faced over 150 rejections before landing her first role. In a recent interview, the 22-year-old actress revealed that during her early struggle, a director once called her at 3 a.m. and shockingly said, "If you want a chance, you must spend a night with me." Kashika said she immediately refused and stood by her values, adding that she never wanted to look back with guilt. She spoke about the dark side of the industry, where many women face similar situations but remain silent out of fear of losing opportunities. Kashika's bold confession highlights the persistent issue of exploitation in cinema and the strength it takes to speak out.



Samantha Turns Down Crores in Ads

Samantha Ruth Prabhu, one of India's leading actresses, recently revealed that she turned down over 15 brand endorsements last year, losing crores in potential earnings. In an interview with Foodpharmer, Samantha explained that her decisions were driven by a desire to make responsible choices that could positively impact others. Reflecting on her early years in the film industry, she admitted that she once equated success with multiple film offers and endorsement deals. While she was once

thrilled to represent big multinational brands, her perspective has evolved. Samantha shared that she now approaches endorsements with deep introspection and care. She consults with three doctors before approving any brand, ensuring it aligns with her values. She also urged young people not to feel invincible in their 20s, as she once did. Samantha was last seen in Citadel: Honey Bunny on Amazon Prime Video and has several exciting projects in the pipeline.

Vishwambhara Teaser Used AI, Not VFX



Vishwambhara, the upcoming socio-fantasy film starring Megastar Chiranjeevi and directed by Bimbisara fame Vassishtha, is one of the most awaited releases of the year. A few months ago, the film's teaser was released but faced criticism for its underwhelming visuals, which many assumed were poor-quality VFX. However, producer Mallidi Satyanarayana Reddy recently clarified that the visuals in the teaser were not VFX but AI-generated. In an interview, he explained that VFX companies initially estimated a three-month

timeline to complete the work. The team gave them six months to meet the Sankranti release deadline. But even after that period, the VFX was incomplete. As a temporary solution, the team used AI-generated visuals for the teaser. Following the backlash, they decided to drop AI visuals entirely and stick to traditional VFX, ensuring better quality. This clarification has reassured mega fans, who were concerned about the film's visual standards. The team is now taking its time for a polished final product.

Arjun S/O Vyjayanthi Trailer Wows Fans

The trailer of Arjun S/O Vyjayanthi, starring Nandamuri Kalyanram and veteran actress Vijayashanti, has taken the internet by storm. Following the buzz created by its teaser, the newly released trailer has only intensified excitement, going viral across social media platforms. Unveiled at a grand pre-release event, the trailer launch featured Jr. NTR as the chief guest. His powerful speech praising the film further fueled expectations. NTR revealed that audiences would be blown away by the movie, especially highlighting the final 20 minutes as a cinematic high point with Kalyanram delivering his career-best performance in an innovative climax. The event drew massive crowds of Nandamuri fans, adding to the film's momentum. Social media is abuzz with praise for Kalyanram's emo-

tional performance alongside Vijayashanti, his striking screen presence, and impactful dialogue delivery. With the trailer trending at the top, Arjun S/O Vyjayanthi has officially become one of the most anticipated films of the season.

