



Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

H 33° C

L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

H 35° C

L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

H 36° C

L 26° C



Congress workers must show courage and ideological clarity to counter BJP-RSS narratives.

Siddaramaiah emphasizes Ambedkar's legacy, criticizes Manuwadi ideology and historical distortions.

Announces establishment of Ambedkar Museum and tallest statue in Bengaluru.

CM Siddaramaiah Calls on Congress Cadre to Expose RSS-BJP Lies, Uphold Ambedkar's Ideals

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday urged Congress party workers to boldly confront the "lies" propagated by the BJP and RSS, and to uphold the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the ideological struggle for India's future. Speaking at the 134th Ambedkar Jayanti celebration held at Bharat Jodo Bhavan, KPCC Office, the CM called for ideological clarity among party activists to effectively challenge the Manuwadi narrative. "Our workers must have the courage to speak the truth. We must explain to present generation youth why Ambedkar burned the Manusmriti and why Manuwadis opposed our Constitution," Siddaramaiah stated. He stressed that Ambedkar's mission was



to liberate all castes and communities oppressed under the caste system. The Chief Minister debunked BJP's claims that Congress defeated Ambedkar in elections. Citing a handwritten letter by Ambedkar dated January 18, 1952, Siddaramaiah revealed that Ambedkar clearly blamed Savarkar and Danga

for his electoral defeat. "Yet BJP spreads lies blaming Congress. Our party must take the truth to the people," he said. Highlighting the inclusive nature of the Congress, Siddaramaiah asserted, "Only Congress has consistently designed and implemented programs for all, treating ev-

ery caste and religion equally. The BJP only reveres Godse, the killer of Gandhi." He announced two significant tributes to Ambedkar in Karnataka: the establishment of a dedicated Ambedkar Museum in Bengaluru and the installation of the tallest Ambedkar statue in the country. Challenging Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Siddaramaiah asked, "Can you implement the SCSP/TSP Act across the country, like we did in Karnataka? Show us if you can." The event saw the participation of senior Congress leaders and large numbers of party workers, all paying homage to Ambedkar's enduring vision of social justice, education, and empowerment.

Waqf Amendment Bill: BJP's Bold Move for Transparency and Justice



Repeals Section 40 to prevent land grabbing under Waqf properties.

Non-Muslim members included in Waqf boards to ensure inclusivity.

Bill promotes digitization and financial audits for better transparency.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The BJP-led government's Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, aims to bring long-overdue reforms to the Waqf system, which governs properties donated by Muslims for religious and charitable purposes. Historically plagued by minimal oversight, the system has been vulnerable to corruption and exploitation. This bill is set to address those issues, ensuring proper management and accountability. A central feature of the bill is the repeal of Section 40, which previously gave Waqf Boards unchecked power to unilaterally declare land as Waqf property. This provision was often misused, leading to illegal land grabs. The new bill closes this

loophole, ensuring that properties are properly regulated and used for public welfare. Further strengthening governance, the bill mandates financial audits and digitization of Waqf records. This will allow for greater transparency and ensure that the benefits of Waqf properties reach the marginalized sections of the Muslim community, such as Pasmada Muslims, who have often been sidelined in the decision-making process. Another significant change is the inclusion of non-Muslim members in both state and central Waqf boards. While some critics view this as weakening Muslim representation, the BJP argues that it fosters inclusivity and enhances governance by involving diverse perspectives. Additionally, the bill includes provisions for gender equality, giving women a stronger voice in the management of Waqf properties. The amendment also protects government and tribal lands from being misused under the guise of Waqf property. This ensures that public assets and tribal rights are safeguarded. The Waqf Amendment Bill aligns with global best practices, bringing India's governance of Waqf properties into the modern era. Despite opposition protests, the bill marks a major step toward transparent and inclusive governance.

Dy CM DKS Says Constitution Is the Soul of India, Pays Tribute to Ambedkar

Constitution is the "father and mother" of the nation, says Deputy CM Shivakumar.

Calls for educating future generations on Ambedkar's ideals and contributions.

Emphasizes that true homage to Ambedkar is protecting the Constitution.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Monday said the Constitution of India is not merely a document but the "father, mother, and fraternity" of the nation, asserting that the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar must be preserved through



understanding and upholding its values. Speaking at a program organized by the Social Welfare Department on the steps of Vidhana Soudha as part of the 134th birth anniversary celebrations of Dr. Ambedkar, Shivakumar stated, "We are not worshipping Ambedkar's statue; we are paying homage to his intellect, vision, and unyielding spirit that gave life to modern India."

He highlighted that Ambedkar's contribution was not restricted to any particular community or religion, but was for every citizen of the country. "If there is life in our democracy, it is because Ambedkar breathed the Constitution into it," he said.

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Karnataka Home Minister to Discuss Rising Crimes by Migrant Workers



Home Minister to hold combined meeting with Labour Minister

Focus on addressing increasing criminal activities by migrant workers

Police fired in self-defense during kidnapping-murder investigation in Hubballi

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara announced on Monday that he would hold a combined meeting with Labour Minister Santosh Lad to discuss measures to address the increasing number of crimes involving migrant workers from other states. His statement follows a tragic incident in Hubballi, where a five-year-old girl was kidnapped and murdered by Ritesh Kumar, a migrant worker from Patna, Bihar, who was killed in police firing.

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Caste Census Report Should Be Made Public to End Confusion - Jayaprakash Hegde

TPN Correspondent | Udupi

Jayaprakash Hegde, former chairman of the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes, on Monday urged the government to make the caste census report public to clear growing confusion and misinterpretations. Speaking to reporters in Udupi, Hegde emphasized

that the report was not just a caste census but a socio-educational survey aimed at understanding the broader realities of various communities. "All castes have been included. I cannot disclose the exact figures, but the caste mentioned



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CM Siddaramaiah to Speak on Caste Report After Cabinet Discussion on April 17th

- CM says no comments on caste census until after cabinet deliberation.
- Cabinet to discuss the caste report exclusively in April 17 special meeting.
- Siddaramaiah slams BJP over false claims on Ambedkar's electoral defeat.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said he would comment on the caste census report only after a special cabinet meeting scheduled for April 17. Speaking to reporters after paying tribute to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his 134th birth anniversary, he emphasized that the matter will be discussed thoroughly before any public statement is made. “We have convened a cabinet meeting on April 17 to discuss this lone subject. After the discussion, I will speak,” Siddaramaiah said, avoiding any direct remarks on the contents of the controversial caste census. The Karnataka cabinet had accepted the Socio-Economic and Educational Survey, commonly referred to as the caste census, on April 11. The data compilation was initially undertaken in 2018 during Siddaramaiah's first term and later finalized by his successor, K. Jayaprakash Hegde, in February 2024. Meanwhile, Siddaramaiah strongly refuted BJP's repeated allegations that the Congress was responsible for B.R. Ambedkar's defeat in the Lok Sabha elections.



He cited a letter written by Ambedkar himself, where the Constitution's architect clearly named Hindutva ideologue V.D. Savarkar and Communist leader S.A. Dange as contributing to his loss. He further accused the BJP of attempting to falsely appropriate the legacies of Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and Dr. Ambedkar. “Those who opposed Ambedkar and assassinated Gandhi are now trying to claim their legacy. The same Manuvadis who were against the Constitution are pretending to be its torchbearers,” the CM alleged. With heightened political tensions around the caste report, all eyes are now on the April 17 cabinet meeting, which will determine the state government's next steps on the contentious issue.

Govt Approves Naming Tumakuru Railway Station After Sri Shivakumara Swamiji

- CM Siddaramaiah, Minister in place, I will meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah soon to push for final clearance,” said Somanna.
- Parameshwara give nod for renaming The railway station will be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 89 crore. The proposal to rename it as Dr Shri Shri Shivakumara Swamiji Railway Station was backed by the state infrastructure development department, citing the seer's extraordinary service to society.
- Union MoS V Somanna to meet Amit Shah for final clearance from Home Ministry
- Station to be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 89 crore



TPN Correspondent | Tumakuru
Union Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti, V Somanna, on Monday announced that the Karnataka government has officially approved renaming the Tumakuru railway station after the revered seer, Sri Shivakumara Swamiji of Siddaganga Mutt. Speaking to the media, Somanna, who is also the MP from Tumakuru, thanked Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and District In-charge Minister Dr G Parameshwara for their support. He added that the renaming process had faced a six-month delay, but the state's formal consent has now paved the way for the proposal to progress. “The Ministry of Railways had written to the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding the renaming. With the state's approval now

miji, who headed Siddaganga Mutt for nearly 87 years since 1930, is revered as the “walking god” for his contributions in education, food, and shelter to thousands of orphaned and underprivileged children, irrespective of caste or creed. The Mutt holds immense respect across communities in Karnataka and has been visited by several national leaders, including presidents and prime ministers, acknowledging the Swamiji's legacy of humanitarian service. Officials are hopeful the Ministry of Home Affairs will positively consider the request and formally rename the station in honour of the seer soon.

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Karnataka Home Minister to Discuss Rising Crimes by Migrant Workers

Parameshwara emphasized that while migrant labourers cannot be prevented from coming to Karnataka, the state must find ways to address the rising criminal activities associated with them. “Bengaluru is a growing city attracting workers from across India, but we are witnessing a surge in crime involving some of them. We need to take measures to address this issue,” he said. Referring to the Hubballi incident, Parameshwara called it a “ghastly tragedy” and explained that police had arrested the accused swiftly. However, when the accused was taken to his

residence for further investigation, he suddenly attacked the officers, prompting them to open fire in self-defense, which resulted in his death. Regarding a separate case of molestation in Suddaguntepalaya, Bengaluru, Parameshwara updated that the suspect, Santosh D, was arrested in Kerala after a weeklong manhunt and is being brought to Bengaluru for further investigation. Parameshwara's statements come amid growing concerns about the role of migrant workers in criminal activities in the state, with authorities vowing to explore effective measures.

Dy CM DKS Says Constitution Is the Soul of India, Pays Tribute to Ambedkar

Reaffirming the government's commitment to Ambedkar's path, Shivakumar said, “Our entire government is guided by his ideology. Walking on the foundation he laid, we are striving to deliver justice and equality for all.” He called on people, especially the younger generation, to learn about the Constitution and what it stands for. “We may not know what contribution we will make

to the next generation, but if we can help them understand the Constitution given by Babasaheb, that alone is our greatest value,” he remarked. Asserting that Ambedkar remains the most revered figure across the country, Shivakumar urged citizens to treat the act of protecting the Constitution as the true form of respect and gratitude to the architect of modern India.

Caste Census Report Should Be Made Public to End Confusion - Jayaprakash Hegde

by individuals themselves was recorded. Officials did not decide or assign castes; data was gathered as per responses from household members,” Hegde clarified. Noting that various individuals are making conflicting claims about the report, he said a public release is the best way to address these issues. “Only after it is made public can meaningful discussions happen. If there are any mistakes, the report allows for corrections. Even the Chief Minister has stated that 95% of the report is accurate,” he added. Rejecting opposition claims that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah drafted the report at his residence, Hegde pointed out that

the survey was conducted under the supervision of Deputy Commissioners in every district and executed by trained schoolteachers. “Teachers simply recorded information as given by respondents. There's no question of individual bias,” he said. He firmly denied that the report was unscientific or biased, urging critics not to dismiss the effort without examining the document. “It is not a private or politically motivated document. Considerable work went into this, and its implementation is important. The only way to dispel misinformation is to make the report public,” Hegde concluded.

Courts Must Prioritize Child's Welfare Over Parental Rights in Custody Battles

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Legal experts and judges at the Southern Zone Regional Conference emphasized the need for courts to prioritize a child's emotional wellbeing over the battle for parental rights in custody disputes. The session, “Parental Custody of Children: Orders Regarding Visitation Rights and Custody Issues,” concluded as part of the two-day event organized by the Family Courts Committee, Supreme Court of India, and Karnataka Judicial Academy. Experts, including judges from high courts across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, pointed out the importance of understanding how children emotionally process conflict and separation. They stressed the need for custody arrangements that are devel-



opmentally appropriate, not just legally sound, and criticized the current system that often ignores the emotional consequences for children. S. Sushila, an advocate and mediator based in Bengaluru, noted that the current system of alternating custody or visitation frequently disregards how children experience pa-

rental conflict. She argued that children's emotional safety and security should guide custody orders, rather than a simple balancing of parental rights. “For a child, family is not just about biological parents, but anyone they are emotionally attached to,” Sushila said. The conference also discussed challenges posed by cross-border custody disputes. Justice Moushumi Bhattacharya of the Telangana High Court highlighted the complexities of international cases and stressed the need for a sensitive, case-by-case approach to custody matters. The experts called for a uniform approach rooted in the “best interests of the child” principle, in line with Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

KDA to Address Mispronunciations of Town and Village Names on Google Maps

- KDA collaborates with ISRO and Google to fix issues.
- Volunteers in districts to help recheck and confirm names.
- Corrections to be completed in five to six months.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Kannada Development Authority (KDA) is working to address the issue of mispronounced town and village names on Google Maps, which has raised concerns about the accuracy of local pronunciations. For instance, the village of Bilimale in Dakshina Kannada is mispronounced on Google Maps, altering its intended meaning. KDA Chairman Purushothama Bilimale stressed that the names of towns and villages in Karnataka are closely linked to the local environment, his-



tory, and communities. Over time, the pronunciations of these names have evolved, but the introduction of Google Maps has further distorted their correct pronunciations. To address this, KDA is collaborating with ISRO and Google to correct the pronunciations of over 75,000 towns and villages in Karnataka. Bilimale mentioned that while ISRO's NavIC system offers more accurate pro-

nunciations, it is not widely adopted outside India. KDA plans to meet with Google officials to discuss how Google Maps can incorporate accurate voiceovers for these place names. KDA is also deploying volunteers across each district to help recheck the names on Google Maps. If everything proceeds as planned, the corrections are expected to be completed within five to six months. Additionally, KDA has written to Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, urging that commercial establishments include the correct names of villages and towns on their name boards to foster regional cultural awareness. This initiative aims to preserve the linguistic and cultural heritage of Karnataka's place names while enhancing their global visibility.

Caste Census Report a Political Move to Divide, Claims Ashoka

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Leader of Opposition R Ashoka has raised serious allegations against the state's caste census report, calling it a deliberate attempt to divide communities for political advantage. According to Ashoka, the report was allegedly prepared at the residence of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who dictated its contents to the then Backward Commission Chairman, Kantharaju. Ashoka claims that Kantharaju refused to sign the report in protest and left



the meeting. In addition, Ashoka criticized the report's cost, alleging that Rs 150 crore was spent on its preparation, and demanded a full investigation into the misuse of these funds. He further accused the state government of manipulating the report to serve a Muslim vote bank, claiming that the findings exaggerated the Muslim population figures as part of a larger conspiracy. Drawing connections between the caste census and the government's previous

actions, Ashoka pointed out that the Siddaramaiah-led government had celebrated Tipu Jayanti, allocated Rs 10,000 crore for Muslim welfare, and ensured a 4% reservation in government contracts for Muslims. He argued that the caste census report is simply another tool in the government's strategy to consolidate its base along caste and religious lines. Ashoka called on the people of Karnataka to recognize the government's divisive motives and reject the caste census report as a politically driven initiative that aims to create rifts within society.

How Can Muslims Be Considered Minority, Asks C T Ravi

TPN Correspondent | Chikkamagaluru

BJP MLC C T Ravi sparked a fresh political row by questioning how Muslims—who he claimed are the second-largest population group in Karnataka—can still be considered a minority. He alleged that the Congress is misusing the caste census and religious matters for political gain. Speaking to reporters in Chikkamagaluru, Ravi asserted that the power to conduct a caste census lies exclusively with the central government, not state governments. “The Congress government is indulging in unconstitutional moves by pushing a caste-based agenda without proper authority,” he said. He pointed out that there are 56 castes within the Muslim community and alleged that untouchability exists even within those groups. “Pasmada Muslims face discrimination, and those claiming descent from the Prophet refuse to marry into these families,” he said, adding that BJP stands firmly for social justice but not selective appeasement. Slamming the Con-



gress government for not officially releasing the caste census report, Ravi said, “It’s absurd to classify Muslims as minorities when they are the second-largest community in the state. The Congress is clearly trying to polarize society.”

On the issue of reservation, Ravi recalled that the central government had earlier supported promotion-based reservations in court through an affidavit, showcasing BJP’s commitment to the principle of affirmative action. He further accused the Congress of spreading false propaganda about the Waqf Amendment Act, similar to their stance on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). “Waqf properties must be protected, but encroachments on temple lands and farmers’ lands cannot be allowed. Should they claim even Vidhana Soudha or the Supreme Court next?” he asked.

I Don’t Accept Caste Census for Any Reason - MLA Basavaraju Shivaganga

TPN Correspondent | Davangere

Congress MLA from Channagiri, Basavaraju V Shivaganga, on Monday expressed strong opposition to the recently released caste census, calling it “confusing” and “unacceptable under any circumstance.” Speaking to reporters, Shivaganga aligned himself with senior Congress leader and All India Veerashaiva Lingayat Mahasabha president Shamanur Shivashankarappa, stating, “I stand by his view. The caste census should have been discussed before its release. It would be an embarrassment for the government if it has to release the report and then amend it.” He highlighted glaring inconsistencies in the reported figures, pointing specifically to the Sadara sub-sect within the Veerashaiva-Lingayat community. “The report mentions only 67,000 Sadara Lingayats in the state. But there are nearly 60,000 in



Channagiri alone. I don’t understand how the census was conducted,” he said. Shivaganga stressed the importance of accuracy and transparency in such a sensitive matter. “There are about 1.25 crore Veerashaiva Lingayats in Karnataka. If the government wants credibility, it must present clear numbers for each caste without confusion,” he added. His remarks reflect growling dissent within the Congress party over the caste survey data, which was compiled over a decade ago but released under pressure from internal and external political quarters. The MLA’s concerns add to the chorus of voices urging the Karnataka government to revisit and verify the data before taking any further steps.

Minister Chaluvaryaswamy Questions HD Kumaraswamy’s Claims of Admission

- Admitting in House Doesn’t Mean Forgiveness, Chaluvaryaswamy Hits Back at Kumaraswamy
- Accuses Union Minister of indulging in “housebreaking” politics
- Says self-criticism won’t absolve past political wrongdoings

TPN Correspondent | Mandya

Agriculture Minister N Chaluvaryaswamy reignited his ongoing feud with Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, asserting that simply admitting to actions in the Assembly does not equate to an apology or absolution.

Speaking in Mandya, Chaluvaryaswamy re-

sponded to Kumaraswamy’s recent remarks, saying, “If someone admits their mistake in the House, does it mean the mistake is forgiven? Kumaraswamy should clarify this himself.”

He took a sharp dig at the former Chief Minister, claiming, “I have never engaged in housebreaking politics. If you look at



political history, no one has done as much housebreaking as Kumaraswamy. He’s now trying to defend himself by making it seem like he was honest in the Assembly.” The minister emphasized that Kumaraswamy’s attempts to criticize him were futile. “I have never done injustice to anyone. He is targeting me for no rea-

son. He should stop making baseless statements and instead take the time to read a little history,” he added. Chaluvaryaswamy’s comments are seen as a direct rebuttal to Kumaraswamy’s claim that he had openly admitted certain political decisions during a session in the Assembly, implying transparency. However,

the Mandya strongman has now made it clear that such admissions do not absolve past political maneuvering.

The ongoing war of words between the two leaders reflects the deep-seated rivalry and the high-stakes battle for political dominance in the Old Mysuru region ahead of upcoming elections.

Shettar Blames CM Siddaramaiah for State’s Stagnant Development and Worsening Economy

TPN Correspondent | Belagavi

BJP MP Jagadish Shettar on Monday launched a scathing attack on Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, accusing him of failing to revive the state’s economy and halting developmental work since the Congress came to power.

Addressing the media in Belagavi, Shettar said, “Siddaramaiah is an economist. If the BJP had destroyed the economy, he, being an expert, should have reformed it. Instead, he has only resorted to blame without taking action.” He pointed



out that most ongoing development projects were approved during the BJP government’s tenure and claimed there has been no progress since Congress took over.

Shettar alleged that Congress’ guarantee schemes have drained funds for development, a sentiment even echoed by some ruling party MLAs. He criticized Sidda-

ramaiah for remaining silent in the Assembly when his economic policies were questioned by opposition leaders.

“Siddaramaiah has presented a record number of budgets but failed to bring fiscal discipline. People are frustrated with this government, and it was visible during the Jan Akrosh Yatra. More public protests will follow,” he warned. The BJP MP announced that the second phase of the Jan Akrosh Yatra will commence from Belagavi on April 16.

He also took aim at the Congress over rising crime, referencing a re-

cent incident in Hubballi where a police officer shot dead an accused involved in the attempted rape and murder of a girl. “Such officers must be encouraged. But the Congress leadership has failed to control crime in Karnataka,” he added, contrasting it with law enforcement under Yogi Adityanath in Uttar Pradesh.

Shettar dismissed the caste census report as “unscientific” and politically motivated, and criticized delays in MGNREGS action plans. He concluded by urging elected representatives to focus on development beyond party lines.

BJP MLA Munirathna Accuses Dy CM DKS of 15% Cut in ₹2K Crore Drainage Tender

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

BJP MLA from Rajarajeshwari Nagar, Munirathna, has levelled serious corruption charges against Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, alleging irregularities in stormwater drain (SWD) works worth Rs 2,000 crore, aided by a World Bank loan.

Speaking to the media, Munirathna claimed Shivakumar violated the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement (KTPP) Act by manipulating tender conditions to favor 11 specific contracting firms.

He alleged that 15% of the tender amount has been collected as commission — 10% for Shivakumar and 5% for another minister.

The tenders, split into 16 packages ranging from Rs 45 crore to Rs 232 crore, were structured to exclude small local contractors, according to Munirathna. He argued that if smaller packages were issued, it could have saved the state about Rs 200 crore.

He further alleged that a meeting was held at former MP DK Suresh’s residence where BBMP officials and Shivaku-

mar decided on awarding the contracts to preferred companies, including Star Infratech, Ganapathi Stone Crusher, Manu Constructions, and others.

Munirathna accused the government of floating short-term tenders, violating norms requiring a 60-day window for projects exceeding Rs 2 crore. “To benefit selected firms, global tenders were avoided despite the Rs 2,000 crore value,” he said.

The BJP legislator has submitted a petition to Governor Thawarchand Gehlot demanding an investigation and said he



has already filed complaints with the Lokayukta, Enforcement Directorate, and CBI.

Munirathna confirmed

he will move the High Court against Shivakumar on Tuesday, challenging the alleged violations and irregularities.

Let There Be an Investigation, Truth Will Prevail



TPN Correspondent | Vijayapura

Senior BJP leader and Vijayapura MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatin on Monday stated that forming a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe corruption allegations is not an accomplishment for the Congress-led Karnataka government. Speaking to the media, Yatin asserted that a thorough and independent investi-

gation would reveal who was truly involved in corruption.

“Just forming an SIT is not a big deal. Former Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai had already said that such serious allegations should be probed by the CBI or even the NIA. If the Congress is truly committed to fighting corruption, they should support a central investigation,” Yatin said.

He was referring to the Congress’s long-standing

Yatnal on Corruption Allegations

allegation that a 40 percent commission was demanded from contractors during the previous BJP government. Dismissing the claims, Yatnal countered that even during the Congress regime, contractors had suffered, with some allegedly driven to suicide due to non-payment and harassment.

“There have been contractor suicides even un-

der the Congress government. Let there be a fair and full investigation — the people deserve to know the truth about who really committed corruption,” Yatnal added.

The BJP leader also questioned the sincerity behind the Congress’s recent moves, saying political vendetta should not be masked as anti-corruption drives. His remarks

come amidst heightened political exchanges between the ruling Congress and the BJP over corruption charges, with each accusing the other of misleading the public.

Yatnal’s strong stance reflects the BJP’s strategy to challenge the credibility of the Congress’s actions while demanding broader and deeper probes through central agencies.

IIMB-RERI & BAF Empower RWAs for Leadership

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a bid to strengthen community governance and leadership among apartment residents, the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore's Real Estate Research Initiative (IIMB-RERI) and the Bangalore Apartments' Federation (BAF) jointly concluded a specialized training programme for Resident Welfare Association (RWA) office bearers on Sunday. Held at the IIMB campus, the Certificate Programme for RWA Office Bearers focused on addressing the real-world challenges apartment

management committees frequently face—ranging from leadership transitions to modern infrastructure requirements like electric vehicle (EV) charging solutions.

The valedictory session saw active participation from RWA members across the city, who shared their experiences and discussed pressing issues. Among the topics raised were:

- Smooth leadership handovers
- Compliance and governance challenges
- Implementing EV charging infrastructure
- Waste manage-

ment and sustainability practices

- Enhancing community engagement

The programme provided participants with practical insights and frameworks to navigate these challenges effectively. Experts from the real estate, legal, and urban planning sectors were also part of the sessions, guiding RWAs on governance best practices, legal responsibilities, and collaborative leadership.

IIMB-RERI and BAF both emphasized the importance of such capacity-building initiatives in a rapidly urbanizing city



like Bengaluru, where apartments now constitute a major segment of

urban living. Future editions of the programme are expected to expand

and address evolving needs such as smart city integration, sustainable

resource management, and digital governance for RWAs.

NGO Exposes Gaps in National Water Monitoring

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A Bengaluru-based environmental NGO has uncovered serious lapses in India's National Water Quality Monitoring Programme (NWMP), after finding alarming levels of toxic chemicals in the Arkavathy river. The findings, revealed by the Paani Earth Foundation, have prompted the National Green Tribunal (Southern Zone) to take suo motu cognisance of the matter.

The NGO conducted tests on water and sediment samples from various stretches of the Arkavathy river. The results revealed dangerously high concentrations of mercury, the banned pesticide DDT, and carcinogenic polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). These pollutants, the foundation says, are going undetected due to critical flaws in the national monitoring system. In an interlocutory application filed with the tribunal, the foundation highlighted its communication with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in January, where



it raised concerns over the limited range of pollutants currently tracked under the NWMP. The NGO urged authorities to include harmful contaminants like PAHs, DDT, other pesticides, and phthalates in the monitoring list.

One of the key issues flagged was the lack of transparency and accessibility of monitoring data. Although records obtained through the Right to Information (RTI) Act show that the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) operates 80 monitoring stations in the Arkavathy basin, data was publicly available for only 42. Meanwhile, the

CPCB's claim that only 40 stations exist adds to the confusion.

The foundation also criticized the CPCB portal for displaying only the annual minimum and maximum pollutant values, which fail to account for seasonal fluctuations or pollution spikes. They argued that such a narrow reporting format does not provide an accurate picture of real-time water quality. In response, the tribunal has directed the foundation to serve its submissions to all concerned respondents. The KSPCB has requested additional time to file a formal reply.

Engineer's Suicide Bid Near Raj Bhavan

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a dramatic turn of events on Sunday evening, a 26-year-old man attempted to immolate himself near the Karnataka Raj Bhavan in Bengaluru, allegedly to draw media attention to his personal grievances.

The man, identified as Zuhail Ahmed, a resident of Hebbal and an engineer at a private company, arrived at the site around 4:30 pm. His act coincided with a press briefing by a political leader, which had drawn a crowd of reporters to the area. Taking advantage of the media presence, Ahmed doused himself in petrol, reportedly intending to set himself on fire.

However, his attempt was thwarted by quick-thinking journalists



and bystanders. Reporters who noticed his actions rushed to intervene and managed to snatch the plastic bottle containing petrol from him. Notably, Ahmed was not found carrying a matchbox or lighter. Bystanders further doused him with water and immediately alerted the police.

Police from the Vidhana Soudha station took Ahmed into custody and

booked him for causing public nuisance. Preliminary investigations suggest that Ahmed's actions were a desperate call for attention following alleged domestic abuse.

Speaking briefly to the press, Ahmed claimed that he had been assaulted by his wife and had been previously admitted to a hospital due to his injuries. His wife, who resides in Chikkaballapur, had

earlier filed a complaint against him, leading to a case under IPC Section 498A, which pertains to cruelty by a husband or his relatives.

A senior police officer familiar with the case confirmed that the Chikkaballapur police had registered the complaint against Ahmed earlier. His attempt near Raj Bhavan, the officer said, seemed to be more about making a public statement than an actual suicide attempt, given the lack of means to ignite the fuel.

Authorities are now verifying his claims and reviewing both sides of the domestic dispute. Meanwhile, Ahmed remains in police custody, and further action will be determined based on the outcome of the investigation.

Karnataka Revises Forest Proposal for Yettinahole

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Under pressure from the Union environment ministry, the Karnataka government has revised its forest land diversion proposal for the controversial Yettinahole drinking water project, seeking a consolidated clearance for 428 acres of forest land across Hassan and Tumakuru districts. The revised proposal, submitted on March 17 by the additional chief secretary of the state forest department, marks a shift from the state's earlier approach of seeking "piece-meal" approvals. The application, submitted to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and



Climate Change (MoEFCC), seeks Stage 1 (in-principle) clearance for forest diversion by the implementing agency, Visvesvaraya Jala Nigam Limited (VJNL). The plan includes the felling of approximately 9,000 trees. This move comes in response to repeated objections from the Centre. In August 2024, the MoEFCC had flagged the state's tendency to split forest land requests into smaller proposals — a violation

of forest clearance guidelines meant to ensure transparency in assessing environmental impact. The Yettinahole project's fragmented approach, the ministry warned, misrepresented the true scale of ecological damage.

The Yettinahole project's Detailed Project Report (DPR) had estimated a requirement of over 2,965 acres of land, with nearly half of it being forest. Yet, the state had submitted multiple small-scale proposals for diversion, attracting criticism for lack of clarity and potential violations. A 2016 proposal, for example, sought diversion of just 13.93 hectares (34.42 acres), and in later years, additional

requests were submitted without clear links to the main project. Moreover, the Centre also flagged violations dating back to 2019, including evidence from satellite imagery that showed project activities occurring in forest areas not yet officially cleared — raising serious compliance concerns. The revised 428-acre proposal aims to resolve these concerns and potentially fast-track the Yettinahole project, which has long been mired in controversy over environmental impacts, procedural lapses, and forest clearance delays. The state now awaits the Centre's decision on the revised application.

Suspected Theft Sparks Metro Safety Concerns

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A suspected pickpocketing attempt at Bengaluru's Central College metro station has raised fresh concerns about commuter safety on the city's expanding metro network. Vinay Kumar, a resident of Indiranagar, shared his unsettling experience while waiting for a train with his wife. He noticed a man behaving suspiciously, standing unusually close behind him. "When we moved to a different door marking, the man followed us again," Kumar said. Trusting his instincts, he and his wife quickly shifted positions as the train arrived, moving toward the last coach. The suspect did not follow, seemingly caught off guard. Although nothing was stolen, Kumar said the situation was uncomfortable, and the absence of security personnel on the platform made it worse. "With the growing crowd in the coaches, it's hard to find help or even



register a complaint on the spot," he added. The incident has brought attention to the gaps in metro security, especially during peak hours when trains and platforms are crowded. At present, the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRC) relies on station-based security personnel and CCTV surveillance. However, there is little to no deployment of security staff inside the coaches themselves. When asked for comment, a senior BMRC official downplayed the issue, saying such cases remain rare. "There has been no significant rise in complaints of pickpocketing. That said, we will review the matter and make

improvements if necessary," the official stated.

Despite these assurances, regular commuters and citizen groups argue that the current safety measures are inadequate. Suggestions include deploying mobile security staff within trains, increasing visibility of guards on platforms, ensuring all emergency communication systems are functional, and conducting awareness campaigns to help commuters report suspicious behavior effectively. As Bengaluru's metro ridership grows, so too does the need for a more responsive and proactive security system to ensure passenger trust and safety.

Fire Destroys 40 Labour Colony Sheds

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A massive fire broke out at a labourers' colony in Veerannapalya, Govindapura, Bengaluru, on the night of April 12, 2025, destroying at least 40 makeshift sheds. Fortunately, there were no injuries reported, as residents managed to escape to safety in time. The colony houses workers employed at a local toy factory and dailies from various parts of Karnataka. The fire is believed to have started in one of the sheds and quickly spread to the oth-

ers, fueled by the closely packed structures and flammable materials inside. Residents noticed the blaze and immediately raised an alarm, helping their family members and neighbours evacuate before the fire could escalate further. While there was no loss of life, the incident caused significant material damage, with belongings, essential supplies, and goods worth several lakhs reduced to ashes.

The Govindapura Police and personnel from the Fire and Emergency Services arrived at the scene promptly and battled the

flames for nearly four hours before finally bringing the situation under control. Firefighters had to work in challenging conditions, as the tightly packed layout of the colony made it difficult to access the core of the blaze.

Preliminary assessments suggest that the fire may have been triggered by an electrical short circuit, but a detailed investigation is underway to determine the exact cause. The incident has once again highlighted the vulnerability of labour colonies in the city, which often lack proper



infrastructure, fire safety systems, and emergency response mechanisms. Authorities are expected to assess the damage and may provide temporary relief measures for the affected families. The displaced residents have appealed for support to help rebuild their lives and recover from the loss.



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar has announced her decision to recommend Police Sub-Inspector (PSI) Annapurna for the highest

state medal for her brave act in Hubballi. PSI Annapurna shot and killed the murder and attempted rape accused Ritesh Kumar on Sunday. The incident occurred in Hubballi, and Annapurna's prompt

response has been lauded by many for preventing further violence and protecting citizens. Hebbalkar, while speaking to reporters, expressed her admiration for Annapurna's courageous ac-

Hebbalkar to Recommend Highest Medal for PSI Annapurna

tion. She stated that she has always advocated for stringent punishment for criminals involved in atrocities against women and has supported capital punishment when the crime is severe. Hebbalkar emphasized that the act of bravery by PSI Annapurna should be recognized and, therefore, she would be recommending to the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, and Home Minister Dr G Parameshwar to award her the highest state medal. The minister also added

that while the state does not currently offer the Rani Channamma Award to government employees, if it were, Annapurna would have been the first deserving recipient. Hebbalkar further mentioned that the state government is committed to eradicating crimes against women and ensuring justice for victims. On the matter of allegations from the BJP regarding the deteriorating law and order situation in Karnataka, Hebbalkar firmly defended the state government's handling

of the Hubballi incident. She emphasized that the law and order situation in Karnataka had been efficiently managed and said that BJP leaders should look at other states, such as Manipur, to assess the situation. She highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had not visited Manipur despite the ongoing violence and unrest there, which made the BJP's claims about Karnataka's law and order less credible. Additionally, Hebbalkar clarified the Congress party's position on caste cen-

sus, stating that they are not opposed to it. She also explained that the census for Veerashaiva and Lingayat communities had already been conducted separately, and that combining the data would offer more accurate figures. Finally, addressing BJP's celebration of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's centenary visit to Nippani, Hebbalkar said that Congress has deep respect for the Constitution and the upcoming event will be organized by the government after discussions in the cabinet.

Chennai Residents to Protest Waste-to-Energy Plant



TPN Correspondent |Chennai
Announced their plans to protest against the proposed waste-to-energy plant in Kodungaiyur. The protest, which will involve forming a human chain, is scheduled for May 25. This initiative is aimed at registering their opposition to the project, which they believe could have serious environmental and public health consequences.

The proposed plant, being developed by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) and implemented by ReSustainability Limited, has faced growing resistance from local residents. Many believe that the plant will adversely affect the community's health, given its potential to release harmful emissions and pollutants into the environment. Several GCC councillors from the region have also voiced their concerns, joining the residents in opposing the project. Environmental experts have raised alarms about the

long-term impact of such waste-to-energy plants on public health. They argue that the plant's operations could increase air and water pollution in an already vulnerable area. The residents are particularly worried about the toxic gases and particulate matter that could result from the incineration process, leading to respiratory and other health problems. The protest on May 25 aims to send a strong message to the authorities about the residents' commitment to protecting their health and environment. Local leaders are expected to join the demonstration, amplifying the demand for alternative waste management solutions that do not compromise the well-being of the community. As work on the project is set to begin soon, the upcoming protest is expected to be a significant event in the ongoing debate surrounding waste-to-energy technologies and their environmental impact.

Chennai Metro Flamingo Tunnel Set for Completion

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Chennai Metro Rail's tunnel boring machine (TBM), Flamingo, which began its journey in September 2023, is on track to complete the tunnel linking Light House to Thirumayilai by September 2025. The tunnel, spanning a distance of 1.96 kilometers, is part of the Metro's Phase II project, aimed at significantly enhancing the city's metro network.

Flamingo started boring from the Light House station and has been steadily progressing towards Thirumayilai, overcoming various challenges along the way. This phase is particularly important for the city as it is expected to ease congestion and improve connectivity between key areas.

The tunnel will serve as a vital link between Thirumayilai and Kutchery Road, facilitating faster and more efficient travel for commuters.

Once completed, the tunnel will enable driverless trains to operate along this route, which is expected to be operational within the next three years. These advanced, driverless trains will offer a smoother, more reliable commuting experience for thousands of people traveling daily, especially those heading to popular spots like Marina Beach. This area, which attracts significant foot traffic due to its historical and cultural importance, will benefit from the improved metro connectivity.

The Flamingo TBM's journey through the city is a key part of Chennai



Metro Rail's larger plan to modernize the city's transport infrastructure. The phase II project aims to create an integrated metro network that will reduce travel times, ease road congestion, and provide a more sustainable mode of transportation for residents and tourists alike. With the successful

completion of this tunnel and the future implementation of driverless trains, the city is taking significant strides towards a future-proof transport system. The completion of the Flamingo tunnel is a major milestone for the Chennai Metro Rail project, demonstrating the

ongoing commitment to enhancing urban mobility and providing an efficient, eco-friendly alternative to traditional road transport. With several more phases planned, the metro project is set to transform how people commute within Chennai, improving the overall quality of life in the city.

Mumbai Water Tanker Strike Ends After Talks

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

The Mumbai Water Tanker Association has called off its four-day strike after a productive meeting with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) chief.

The strike began as a response to the BMC's issuance of notices to private well owners supplying water to the tankers, causing significant disruption in water deliveries to residential societies, railways, and construction projects.

BMC Municipal Commissioner Bhushan Gagrani assured the as-



sociation that the notices would be revoked and the issue would be addressed in coordination with the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA). This move helped resolve the immediate impasse.

Amol Mandhare, Treasurer of the Mumbai Water Tanker Association, confirmed the strike's end, stating that their intent was never to harm the residents of Mumbai. He added that the associ-

ation had presented their concerns to the BMC Commissioner, who promised to resolve them with the central government. The association also plans to take legal action regarding the issue.

The strike had affected the water supply to numerous sectors, but with the issue now moving forward for resolution, water tankers are expected to resume operations immediately. The association operates over 1,700 registered tankers, with each capable of carrying up to 20,000 liters of water across Mumbai.

Earlier, the BMC had

invoked the Disaster Management Act 2005 to streamline water supply using police and transport authorities, ensuring that the city's essential water services were not disrupted during the critical summer period.

The strike was sparked by the CGWA's new guidelines, which include strict regulations such as requiring proof of well ownership, installation of digital meters, and a no-objection certificate. Tanker operators had expressed concerns over the difficulty of complying with these rules in Mumbai's dense urban environment.



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
In a disturbing in-

cident in Bengaluru, a techie named Junaid Ahmad, hailing from

Chikkaballapura district, attempted to die by suicide near the Governor's

Bengaluru Techie's Suicide Attempt Near Raj Bhavan

residence on Sunday. According to police, he poured petrol on himself and tried to set himself ablaze, claiming he was being mentally tortured by his wife.

Junaid alleged that his wife had filed a false dowry case and multiple other complaints against him. He also claimed that when he approached the Chikkaballapura police to file a counter-complaint, they refused to register his grievance. Frustrated and

feeling helpless, he went to Raj Bhavan to draw attention to his plight by attempting suicide.

Fortunately, police stationed nearby intervened in time, preventing him from harming himself. He was then taken to the Vidhana Soudha police station, where he was counselled and later released, as per police sources.

This case adds to a growing list of tragic incidents in Bengaluru in-

volving marital discord and mental health issues. Recently, another techie reportedly took his life after enduring two years of separation from his wife and child.

In a similar incident, a man set himself on fire in front of his wife's residence in Nagarbhavi after failing to convince her to withdraw a divorce petition.

Moreover, the suicide of techie Atul Subhash shocked the city. He al-

leged harassment by his wife, Nikita Singhanian, who reportedly demanded ₹3 crore for a divorce settlement.

These recurring cases underscore the need for stronger mental health support systems and more sensitive legal and police responses in cases of domestic disputes. Authorities have been urged to treat complaints from both partners with equal seriousness to prevent such extreme outcomes.

Trump’s Tariff U-Turn Rattles Globe

In a stunning reversal, US President Donald Trump has put a temporary pause on his sweeping reciprocal tariffs—except those aimed at China—sending ripples across global markets and evoking comparisons to the erratic rule of medieval sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. While this partial ceasefire has calmed some immediate anxieties, the unpredictable manner in which these economic policies are being implemented and revoked continues to deeply unsettle financial markets and global stakeholders. Trump had earlier launched an all-out trade war, threatening punitive tariffs on imports from nearly every major economy. However, in his latest move, he has narrowed the scope, leaving only China facing the brunt of new tariffs—now raised to a whopping 125%, while other countries are being subjected to a 10% tariff for the next 90 days. The sudden narrowing of this economic offensive has been widely interpreted as both arbitrary and reactive.

The global community is grappling with the unprecedented nature of Trump’s policy-making. Economists and political observers are drawing attention to how critical financial decisions are being made and reversed



with alarming casualness. There’s no modern parallel to this kind of high-stakes economic improvisation in international trade policy. The bilateralization of the trade war—now essentially a standoff between the

US and China—has left analysts puzzled. Was this reversal driven by sheer unpredictability, or was it a strategic retreat in response to the severe backlash from equity and bond markets? Some believe Trump may have been

influenced by feedback from key business leaders and economic advisors, as well as public concern in the US about the impact of his tariffs. Others suggest that this was part of a long-orchestrated plan to economically

isolate China while keeping the rest of the world on relatively neutral ground. However, that theory is hard to reconcile with the initial universal scope of the tariff plan. Sustaining a tariff war with China, without affecting other economies, is far from simple in an interconnected global supply chain. During Trump’s first term, the US had already imposed tariffs on a wide range of Chinese goods, and many expected Trump 2.0 to double down. Yet the flip-flop nature of these decisions has left many questioning whether there is any coherent strategy at all. The uncertainty unleashed by this chaotic approach is particularly damaging. Long-term economic planning, investment, and supply chain management all depend on policy stability and predictability—elements now clearly missing. While a policy can be announced or revoked within days, rebuilding trust and trade infrastructure takes years, if not decades. In the end, Trump’s claim that he hopes for a “good deal with China” only adds another layer of ambiguity. As global markets brace for the next twist, the world watches with concern, unsure of whether diplomacy or disruption will define the next phase of this economic drama.

Ambedkar’s Vision of Manuski and Dignity



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s idea of manus (human) and manuski (human dignity) was rooted not just in Western liberal humanism, but in a deeper, vernacular, and performative understanding of what it means to be human in a caste-based society. His concept of humanness was not merely biological — it was social, ethical, and enacted through dignity, justice, and equality. On April 14, Ambedkar Jayanti, it’s worth revisiting how central these concepts were to Ambedkar’s political and philosophical vision, especially in the context of Dalit liberation.

In his 1925 speech to the Mumbai Province Bahishkrut Parishad in Belgaon, Ambedkar called on Dalits to fight for their manuski — to not just live, but to live with dignity. He posed a fundamental question to the Untouchables: “Do you want sukh (comfort) or manuski?” (Bahishkrut Bharat, Feb 3, 1928). This was not a rhetorical question. Ambedkar was pointing out that dignity, not mere survival or comfort, was the foundation of full personhood. To reclaim manuski, Ambedkar emphasised political representation, social transformation, and the annihilation of caste. He understood that Hinduism, structured on rigid human hierarchies, offered no path to dignity for Dalits. In his seminal — though undelivered — speech Annihilation of Caste (1936), he argued that dismantling caste was essential to creating a society in which manuski could be universally shared. But Ambedkar’s vision did not stop at political change. He and his followers

- **Nitimatta/Naitikta (ethics)**
- **Svabhimān (self-respect)**
- **Svavalamban (self-dependence)**
- **Shila (character)**
- **Ijjat (dignity)**
- **Mansikta (mental ability)**
- **Abhu (honour)**

engaged in a multi-pronged strategy to regenerate Dalit society — educational reform, legal action, social uplift, and religious conversion — all aimed at both external liberation and internal transformation. For Ambedkar, manuski had to be cultivated, not just granted. Importantly, the term humanity in English doesn’t fully capture the depth of manuski in the Dalit context. In Marathi, manuski draws from multiple moral and emotional registers: Together, these formed the foundation for dignified Dalit personhood — a humanity forged in struggle, not bestowed by privilege. Ambedkar’s vision remains a radical blueprint for justice, challenging India to rethink what it means to be truly human.

Can Mamata Weather the Job Storm

As the 2026 West Bengal Assembly election approaches, a political storm threatens to shake Mamata Banerjee’s once-impregnable stronghold. The Supreme Court’s decision to nullify over 25,000 teaching appointments tied to the 2016 recruitment scam has delivered a seismic blow to the Trinamool Congress (TMC), raising questions about Banerjee’s credibility and deepening discontent among her traditional support base — the middle class and rural aspirants. This verdict doesn’t just signify a legal setback; it risks becoming an electoral turning point. Banerjee built her political brand by championing “Ma, Mati, Manush” — the mother, the soil, and the people — and for years, she enjoyed robust support from a broad coalition of urban middle-class voters and rural families. But with thousands of livelihoods wiped out in a single court order, faith in the system has cracked. The scandal’s impact extends far beyond the jobholders. When

multiplied by dependents and families, over a crore people are directly or indirectly affected — especially in suburban and rural Bengal, where government teaching jobs are prized for their stability. These communities now feel betrayed, and the TMC’s promise of governance and meritocracy lies in tatters. Urban anger is simmering too. Kolkata’s middle class, which once embraced Banerjee for her anti-elitist and reformist persona, is disillusioned. The arrest of former minister Partha Chatterjee and revelations of rampant bribery have only intensified outrage. Teachers who followed the rules, only to be dismissed, are protesting — and their voices are echoing across Bengal’s education ecosystem. Signs of political erosion are already visible. Despite winning 29 Lok Sabha seats in 2024, the TMC trailed in 47 of Kolkata’s 144 municipal wards and lost two Assembly segments. Incidents like the R G Kar rape-murder case have fur-

ther dented Banerjee’s image as a protector of the common people. Yet, while the TMC is wounded, the BJP is not fully poised to capitalize. The party’s state leadership is fractured and lacks a charismatic face who can rival Banerjee’s populist appeal. Leaders like Suvendu Adhikari and Sukanta Majumder are attacking with full force, but translating this into votes requires a unified strategy and clear vision, something the BJP still struggles with. Meanwhile, Banerjee is attempting to reclaim lost ground by portraying herself as the victim of a BJP-CPI(M) conspiracy, a narrative that often garners sympathy in Bengal. Historically, her ability to turn adversity into advantage has kept her politically afloat. Ultimately, the 2026 election could hinge on whether Banerjee can rebuild trust — or whether the BJP can finally present a compelling alternative. Either way, West Bengal is bracing for a political showdown unlike any in recent memory.



Gujarat ATS, Coast Guard Seize ₹1,800 Crore Worth of Drugs in High-Seas Operation

In a major anti-narcotics operation, the Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) jointly seized 300 kilograms of suspected methamphetamine valued at ₹1,800 crore after smugglers dumped the contraband into the Arabian Sea and fled across the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), officials said on Monday.

The overnight operation was conducted on April 12-13 in the Arabian Sea near the IMBL off the Gujarat coast, based on specific intelligence received by the Gujarat ATS. Acting swiftly, the ICG diverted one of its ships from the Western Region to intercept the suspect vessel.

According to an official release, the Coast Guard ship managed to locate the suspicious boat despite challenging visibility conditions. Upon spotting the approaching patrol vessel, the smugglers quickly jettisoned their cargo into the sea and escaped across the IMBL, taking advantage of their proximity to international waters and the distance between the vessels at the time of detection.

“The ICG ship deployed its sea boat immediately to recover the jettisoned narcotics while commencing a hot pursuit of the fleeing vessel,” the release stated. However, due to the geographical constraints and the swift movement of the smugglers, interception



tion could not be achieved.

Despite the challenges of operating in darkness and rough seas, the Coast Guard successfully recovered the dumped contraband. The narcotics, believed to be methamphetamine, were brought ashore to Porbandar and handed over to the Gujarat ATS for further investigation.

Officials noted that this operation marks the 13th successful joint mission by the Gujarat ATS and the Indian Coast Guard in recent

years, highlighting the strong synergy and coordination between the two agencies in safeguarding national interests and coastal security.

The seizure underscores the persistent threat of drug trafficking through maritime routes and the increasing need for coordinated intelligence-led operations. Investigations are ongoing to trace the origins and intended recipients of the consignment, and efforts are underway to identify and apprehend the smugglers who escaped into international waters.



Priyanka Gandhi Likely to Be Elevated

The Congress party is reportedly considering a significant move to elevate Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to the post of vice president as part of a broader push for structural reforms within the organisation. While an official decision is yet to be made, party insiders say discussions around her formal promotion have intensified in recent weeks.

Currently, Priyanka Gandhi serves as the General Secretary of the party, though she does not hold any specific organisational charge. Despite this, she has been actively involved behind the scenes, particularly in driving new initiatives aimed at strengthening the party's grassroots network.

One of her major recent contributions is a pilot project focused on empowering district Congress presidents, beginning with Gujarat. This initiative aims to decentralise decision-making and increase the responsibilities of district-level leaders, giving them greater authority and autonomy to make impactful changes at the local level. If the pilot proves effective in Gujarat, the Congress plans to expand the model to other states across the country. Party sources view this project as a reflection of Priyanka Gandhi's growing strategic role within the organisation. Her ability to steer internal reforms, especially at a time when the Congress is trying to revamp its structure and operational efficiency, is being seen as a key asset for the party's revival efforts.

The proposed changes go beyond just her elevation. The Congress is reportedly preparing for a set of broader organisational reforms aimed at streamlining internal systems and improving functionality at all levels. The leadership believes that such reforms are essential to strengthen the party ahead of crucial electoral battles, including the upcoming state and national elections. According to insiders, while Priyanka Gandhi's new designation is yet to be finalised, her increasing involvement in shaping policy, internal structures, and grassroots strategies signals a clear shift in her influence within the party. Her elevation to vice president could serve as both a symbolic and strategic move, reinforcing the Gandhi family's central role while also introducing a more reform-oriented leadership style.

As discussions continue, many within the party view her potential rise as a much-needed catalyst for revitalising the Congress and aligning its future course with evolving political dynamics.

Golconda Blue Diamond Set for Auction

A rare and radiant 23.24-carat vivid blue diamond with a rich Indian royal legacy is poised to capture global attention at Christie's Magnificent Jewels sale in Geneva. Known as The Golconda Blue, the diamond is expected to fetch between USD 35 million and USD 50 million (approximately Rs 300-430 crore), making it one of the most valuable blue diamonds to be auctioned in recent years.

The gem hails from the legendary Golconda mines, located in present-day Telangana, India—historically renowned for producing some of the finest and rarest diamonds in the world. Its exceptional quality, deep blue hue, and royal provenance add to its prestige and desirability among collectors and connoisseurs.

The Golconda Blue was once part of the illustrious royal collections of the Maharajas



of Indore and Baroda. Now mounted in a contemporary ring crafted by acclaimed Parisian designer JAR (Joel Arthur Rosenthal), the diamond continues its legacy by blending regal history with modern artistry.

Christie's International Head of Jewelry, Rahul Kadakia, highlighted the stone's unmatched significance, calling it “one of the rarest blue diamonds in the world.” He compared The Golconda Blue to other celebrated diamonds of Golconda origin, such

as the Archduke Joseph Diamond and the Princie Diamond, both known for their noble lineage and exceptional brilliance.

“Exceptional noble gems of this caliber come to market once in a lifetime,” Kadakia remarked, underscoring the rarity and importance of the diamond. He emphasized that its royal heritage, exquisite color, and remarkable size make it a treasure of global and historical importance.

For India, The Golconda Blue is more than just a gemstone—it is a tangible link to the country's illustrious past, evoking images of princely states, royal courts, and a flourishing diamond trade centered in the Golconda region. The upcoming auction is not just a sale, but a moment of cultural significance, as one of India's finest jewels prepares to change hands on the world stage.

Karun Nair Disappointed Despite IPL Half-Century

Karun Nair, the experienced Vidarbha batter, made a strong comeback in the 2025 Indian Premier League (IPL) with a scintillating knock of 89 runs off 40 balls. His performance, however, came in a losing effort as Delhi Capitals succumbed to Mumbai Indians in their latest encounter. Despite his remarkable innings, which included his first IPL half-century in seven years, Nair remained disappointed, emphasizing that individual performances hold little value if the team does not win.

The 33-year-old, who had been absent from the IPL for three years, was brought in as an Impact Player and delivered a solid contribution. However, he refused to dwell on his personal achievement during the post-match interview. Nair expressed his disappointment with the outcome, underscoring the importance of team success over individual milestones. “We play to win the match, so there is disappointment. No matter how much we score, if the team does not win, then there is no value of it,” he remarked, adding that winning was his primary focus.

The knock was a welcome return for Nair, especially after a long absence from the IPL, but he felt his efforts were futile as Delhi Capitals couldn't finish the job. He noted how important it was for the set batters to stay at the crease for longer periods. “Obviously, it was easier for the set batter to play than for the new batter,” Nair explained. “It was very important for a set batter to continue, but we lost wickets at regular intervals, making it tough to chase down the target.”

Despite the loss, Nair acknowledged Mumbai Indians' strong bowling performance, which



kept the Capitals under pressure throughout the match. He pointed out that the team struggled to form partnerships, an essential aspect in T20 cricket. “We were all looking to score runs quickly, but we couldn't stitch together partnerships,” he added.

The batter remains hopeful that his team will learn from this defeat and continue their momentum in future games. Nair's perspective on the loss reflects his commitment to the team's success and his determination to contribute to their winning efforts in the coming matches.

Anti-Waqf Violence Spreads in Bengal

Violent protests over the Waqf (Amendment) Act continue to escalate in West Bengal, with fresh reports of unrest emerging from a second district. After days of clashes in Murshidabad's Jangipur area, the tension has now reportedly spread to parts of Malda, raising alarm among authorities and prompting urgent legal and security interventions.



On Monday, a plea was filed in the Supreme Court seeking a court-monitored Special Investigation Team (SIT) probe into the violence. Filed by advocate Shashank Shekhar Jha, the petition calls for immediate action to protect lives and properties at risk due to the ongoing unrest. It also urges the court to ensure accountability and transparency in the investigation.

The situation first turned violent in Murshidabad on Saturday when protests against the Waqf (Amendment) Act took a violent turn. Protesters set fire to multiple vehicles, and visuals from the scene showed flames and thick smoke engulfing parts of Jangipur. The violence left at least three people dead and over 100 arrested. Authorities fear that unchecked misinformation could inflame tensions further.

Following the clashes, the Calcutta High Court held an urgent hearing on a court holiday and ordered the immediate deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) in Murshidabad. The division bench led by Justice Soumen Sen stated that the court could not remain a si-

lent spectator and stressed the constitutional responsibility to protect civilians during such crises.

Jawed Shamim, Additional Director General (Law and Order), said on Monday that the administrations of both Murshidabad and Malda are working in coordination to restore peace. So far, 210 arrests have been made, and law enforcement has launched efforts to prevent the spread of rumors.

Nineteen displaced families have returned to their homes, and some businesses have resumed operations. Police are using loudspeakers to encourage residents to resume normal activities and urging calm amid ongoing investigations.

The violence, which began as a protest against legal amendments, has taken a deadly turn and now risks spiraling into a wider law-and-order crisis. With unrest spreading to more districts, the state's response and the outcome of the Supreme Court plea will be crucial in determining the next steps toward restoring peace.



Sheikh Hasina sends a ‘play with fire, you burn too’ warning to Yunus govt

Saying ‘their audacity astonishes me’

TPN Correspondent | Dhaka

Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who was ousted from office last year, issued a strong warning to the country’s interim caretaker government on Tuesday, cautioning that “if you play with fire, it will burn you too.” Hasina’s remarks come in the wake of increasing threats to ban her long-standing political party, the Awami League, which has been a central force in Bangladesh’s politics for decades.

In a virtual address from India, where she has been living since fleeing Bangladesh last August, Hasina condemned the interim government for its audacity in attempting to erase the Awami League’s historical role in the country’s independence struggle. She specifically accused Professor Muhammad Yunus, who has been linked to efforts undermining the Awami League, of erasing the party’s contributions to the Liberation War.

Hasina, 77, emphasized that the Awami League, founded in 1948, was instrumental in securing the rights of the people of East Pakistan, which later became Bangladesh. She reminded the public that the country’s independence in 1971 was achieved under the leadership of her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the founding father of the nation, and through the organizational strength of the Awami League. “The name of the country where they now live was given by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib,” Hasina said, reinforcing her father’s role in uniting the people of Bengal and securing the nation’s freedom.

The call to ban the Awami League, led by Hasina’s supporters, has been met with resistance from rival political groups like the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). While some extreme right-wing factions continue to demand the party’s disbandment, the proposal has failed to gain substantial backing from other major political players in Bangladesh.

Hasina also addressed the violence that erupted in 2024, which resulted in significant casualties among Awami League activists, police officers, and members of minority communities. Reflecting on the human toll of the crisis, Hasina questioned the actions of the current regime and warned that their attempts to suppress her party could have dire consequences.

As political tensions escalate in Bangladesh, Hasina’s statements underscore the growing divide and the uncertain future of the country’s political landscape.

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 | Ukrain

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.

China Halts Rare Earth Exports Amid Escalating US Trade War, Threatens Global Supply Chains

TPN Correspondent | US

As tensions between the United States and China intensify, Beijing has suspended the export of several key rare earth elements, metals, and magnets—critical materials used across industries such as defense, electronics, automotive, aerospace, and semiconductors. The move, seen as a strategic response to President Donald Trump’s latest tariff hike on Chinese goods, threatens to disrupt global supply chains and significantly impact American manufacturers.

According to a report by The New York Times, Chinese authorities are currently drafting a new regulatory framework for rare earth exports. While this system is being developed, shipments of these crucial materials have been halted at several Chinese ports. Once implemented, the new system may permanently restrict access to these materials for select companies, particularly American military contractors.

China, which produces about 90% of the



world’s rare earth elements, has placed seven categories of medium and heavy rare earths—such as samarium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, lutetium, scandium, and yttrium—on an export control list. These elements are vital for manufacturing high-tech equipment, including missiles, EV motors, jet engines, and semiconductors. The United States, by contrast, has only one rare earth mine and remains heavily dependent on Chinese imports.

Beijing imposed these new export restrictions on April 2, coinciding with its broader retaliatory package against the US, which includes increased tariffs and specific product bans. While not an outright ban, China now requires special export licenses to ship rare earths and associated finished products abroad. Industry experts warn that the licensing system is currently underdeveloped, raising concerns about prolonged delays and dwindling international supplies.

The decision underscores China’s strategic use of its dominance in the rare earth sector as a geopolitical tool. Lockheed Martin, Tesla, and Apple are among major US companies that rely on Chinese rare earths. Though the US maintains some stockpiles, they are insufficient to sustain long-term defense manufacturing.

Tim Cook’s Viral Video Explains Why Apple Still Builds iPhones in China Despite Rising US Pressure

Apple CEO Tim Cook is once again in the spotlight as a resurfaced 2024 video gains traction online, offering rare insight into why the tech giant continues to manufacture iPhones in China instead of shifting operations to the United States. In the widely shared clip, Cook challenges the long-held assumption that Apple’s presence in China is driven by low labour costs.



“The popular conception is that companies come to China because of low labour costs. I’m not sure what part of China they go to, but the truth is China stopped being the low labor cost country years ago,” Cook says in the video.

Instead, Cook emphasizes China’s unparalleled manufacturing infrastructure and skilled workforce as the real reasons behind Apple’s deep-rooted production presence there. He highlights the scale and precision required to manufacture Apple devices — processes that demand specialised tooling engineers and high-level materials handling capabilities. According to Cook, while it may be difficult to gather a roomful of such engineers in the US, China could fill several football fields with them.

The video has gone viral amid rising political

calls in the US to repatriate manufacturing jobs. President Donald Trump recently expressed a desire for tech companies like Apple to start producing more devices domestically. The White House has also pointed to Apple’s planned \$500 billion US investment as a potential signal of shifting priorities.

However, industry experts caution that Apple is unlikely to bring large-scale manufacturing back to the US anytime soon. Reports from Bloomberg suggest that the US lacks the skilled labor, supplier ecosystem, and infrastructure necessary to support Apple’s complex production needs at scale.

Meanwhile, Apple is making moves to diversify its supply chain. India has emerged as a key partner in this strategy. Apple, through contract manufacturer Foxconn, is expanding a 300-acre iPhone plant in Bengaluru.

Meta Faces Landmark Antitrust Trial Over Instagram and WhatsApp Acquisitions

TPN Correspondent | Newyork

Meta Platforms Inc is heading into a historic antitrust trial that could potentially force the tech giant to divest Instagram and WhatsApp — two of its most valuable platforms. The trial, which begins Monday, marks a major test for the Federal Trade Commission’s (FTC) efforts to rein in Big Tech.

The case stems from a 2020 lawsuit filed during former President Donald Trump’s administration, accusing Meta — then Facebook — of engaging in anti-competitive practices by acquiring Instagram in 2012 and WhatsApp in 2014. The FTC alleges these deals were part of a strategy to eliminate competition and maintain Meta’s monopoly in the social media space.

According to the FTC, CEO Mark Zuckerberg’s long-held belief that “it is better to buy than compete” guided Facebook’s acquisition strategy. The agency claims Meta pursued a pattern of buying up emerging rivals to neutralize



threats, especially during a shift from desktop to mobile platforms.

Instagram, purchased for \$1 billion, and WhatsApp, acquired for \$22 billion, were instrumental in helping Facebook adapt to mobile and stay relevant with younger users. The FTC argues that Meta used these acquisitions and internal policies to stifle innovation and deter competition.

However, the FTC’s case hinges on a narrow market definition that excludes major players like

TikTok, YouTube, and Apple’s iMessage — something experts say could weaken their argument. Meta counters that it faces intense competition and accuses the FTC of rewriting the rules years after clearing the acquisitions.

In a statement, Meta said, “The FTC’s case defies reality. Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp compete daily with TikTok, YouTube, iMessage, and more. This lawsuit threatens innovation and sends a message that no deal is ever final.”



Market Outlook and Stock Picks

Sectoral Momentum Amid Global Trade Shifts



sumer durables, FMCG, public sector enterprises and oil companies rose last week. It is better to stay away from IT stocks.
Stock Recommendations
Power Grid:



These shares, which have been in a downtrend for a few months, have now gained momentum. They have taken support at the crucial Rs. 250 level and turned around. Relative strength is also increasing. Investors should take a position above Rs 300 with a target price of Rs 322/330 in this counter, which closed at Rs 304 last Friday. A stop loss is mandatory at Rs 292.
Gujarat Gas Limited:
This counter, which has been in a downtrend since the beginning of 2024, has been forming a base since February this year. It is continuing to remain stable at Rs 380. Investors should enter this counter, which



closed at Rs 428 last Friday with a profit of 5.9%, at Rs 410/420 with a target price of Rs 490. A stop loss is mandatory at Rs 400.

Patanjali Foods:



This stock is performing well even in a losing market. Momentum and relative strength are good. It has been moving in the Darvas box pattern at Rs 1800 for a few months. Investors should take a position in the Rs.1850 range with a target price of Rs.2150 in this counter, which closed with a gain of 4.1% last Friday. Stop loss should be placed at Rs.1810.

Laurus Lab:
These shares have been in an uptrend



for a few months. They are currently moving in a range bound at the highest level. Short-term momentum is good. Average volume is increasing. Investors should take a position in the Rs.600 range with a target price of Rs.655 in this counter, which closed with a gain of 7.4% last Friday. Stop loss at Rs.585 is mandatory.
Jindal Stainless
These shares have been in a downtrend for a few months. Since the volume is registering less, it seems that the fall is likely to stop. Investors should take positions at Rs 530/540 with a target price of Rs 610 in this counter, which closed at Rs 542 with a gain of 5.8% last Friday. A stop loss at Rs 520 is mandatory.



Domestic stock markets may be mixed this week. US President Donald Trump's postponement of tariffs on all countries except China for 90 days has allayed fears of an economic slowdown. Supply dependence on the

Dragon Country is noteworthy. As this trade war is likely to benefit India, momentum may increase in some sectoral stocks. However, the market will follow Trump's comments and geopolitical equations. Shares of con-

Indian Shrimp Exporters Get Relief as US Pauses Higher Tariff

India's seafood exporters are gearing up to ship 35,000 to 40,000 tonnes of shrimp to the United States after President Donald Trump temporarily paused a planned tariff hike. The proposed reciprocal duty of 26% was rolled back to 10%, bringing a wave of relief to exporters and ensuring continued trade momentum.

K.N. Raghavan, Secretary General of the Seafood Exporters Association of India, told PTI, "There is a lot of relief now as we are at par with other exporters to the US. The shipments that were held back will now be processed." According to him, nearly 2,000 containers of shrimp, which had been delayed due to tariff uncertainty, are now being readied for export.

Trump's decision on April 9 to hold off on the tariff hike, just a week after it was announced, gives Indian exporters a crucial 90-day window to fulfil existing orders without facing additional costs. This decision retains a 10% blanket tariff on seafood imports from most countries, excluding China, which continues to face a steep 145% duty.

Currently, Indian shrimp exports to the US are subject to an effective customs duty of 17.7%, which includes a 5.7% countervailing



duty and 1.8% anti-dumping duty. Under delivery duty-paid (DDP) arrangements, Indian exporters typically absorb these costs themselves, making the temporary pause even more significant for preserving profit margins on already contracted shipments. Despite the tariff concerns, the US remains India's largest shrimp market, both in terms of volume and value. In the 2023-24 fiscal year, India exported shrimp worth \$2.7 billion to the United States. Encouragingly, industry sources have reported no decline in orders.

The Seafood Exporters Association is now urging the Indian government to push for long-term solutions during upcoming trade negotiations, particularly focusing on establishing a level playing field for India's seafood industry before the 90-day tariff pause expires.

The temporary relief has re-energized the sector, offering exporters a window of opportunity to maintain strong trade ties with their largest customer.

China's Exports Surge Ahead of Looming U.S. Tariffs

China's exports saw an unexpected and sharp rebound in March 2025, jumping 12.4% year-on-year in dollar terms, according to data released by the country's customs authority on Monday. The growth, which comes just ahead of major tariff hikes announced by the United States, marks a significant reversal from the 3% decline recorded in February.

The latest numbers surpassed all estimates in a Bloomberg survey of analysts, where the median forecast had predicted a more modest 4.6% increase. This performance highlights China's aggressive push to ship goods before fresh trade barriers take effect, particularly with exports to Southeast Asia reaching near-record levels.

Economists suggest that the spike is largely driven by front-loading activity, as exporters rushed to fulfill orders before Washington's new tariff measures are enforced. The U.S. administration under President Donald Trump has recently escalated its trade stance on China, reintroducing and expanding duties on a wide range of Chinese goods as part of its broader "America First" trade policy.

The Chinese government is closely monitoring the situation. In a statement earlier on Monday, the Commerce Ministry called on the U.S. to "correct its mistakes" and to "heed rational voices" that support stable trade relations. The Ministry also warned

that the tariff hike would likely disrupt global supply chains and hurt consumers and businesses on both sides.

Meanwhile, the rise in exports is seen as a temporary boost amid a more uncertain long-term outlook. Analysts caution that while March's numbers reflect strong external demand and proactive exporter behavior, the upcoming tariffs could result in a



slowdown over the next quarter, particularly if retaliatory measures are implemented or trade tensions escalate further.

This export rebound comes at a crucial time for China's economy, which is working to regain momentum after periods of sluggish domestic consumption and external uncertainty. Strong export figures may offer short-term relief, but the threat of a prolonged trade standoff with the U.S. remains a major concern for Beijing and global markets alike.

India's Manufacturing Sector Shows Late FY25 Uptick, But FY26 Q1 Outlook Mixed

India's industrial production showed signs of recovery towards the end of the financial year 2024-25, backed by strong performances in high-frequency indicators such as the manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, and e-way bill generations, according to a recent report by the Bank of Baroda (BoB).

The report indicated that these positive signals suggest a rebound in production in the closing months of FY25. "Given the latest improvement in manufacturing PMI for March 2024, along with a pick-up in e-way bill generations and GST collections, we expect production to have reported some improvement towards the end of the last fiscal year," the report noted.

However, the outlook for the first quarter of FY26 remains cautious. BoB warned of emerging headwinds, particularly due to uncertain

global trade dynamics. Export growth remains a significant risk factor, especially amid geopolitical and economic volatility, including continued tensions between the United States and China.

The report also emphasized that the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) recent decision to reduce policy interest rates could serve as a tailwind for the manufacturing sector by lowering borrowing costs and incentivizing investment and production. Additionally, a 90-day pause announced by the Trump administration on the imposition of new country-specific tariffs, alongside a decline in global commodity prices, has further buoyed near-term expectations.

Nonetheless, India's Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data for February 2025 revealed a more nuanced picture. IIP growth slowed to 2.9%, down from 5.6% in February 2024 and

5.2% in January 2025. The decline was broad-based, affecting key sectors such as mining and electricity, with the manufacturing segment also seeing moderate weakening.

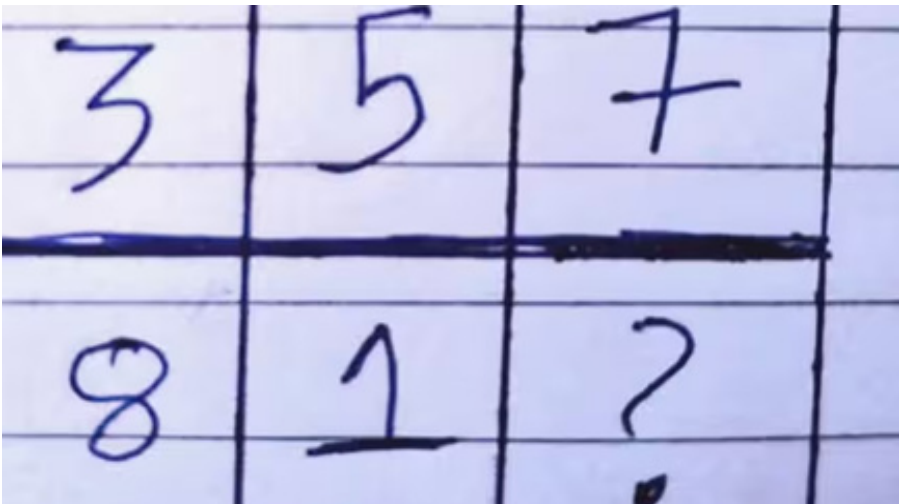
Within manufacturing, industries like basic metals, motor vehicles, chemicals, and apparel reported lower output, while pharmaceuticals, textiles, and electronics registered modest growth. Among use-based classifications, only capital goods saw year-on-year growth, whereas consumer durables, infrastructure, and non-durables declined.

Overall, IIP growth for the fiscal year to date stands at 4.1%, down from 6% in the same period last year. While positive domestic signals provided a lift at the end of FY25, the mixed global environment suggests a cautious start to FY26 for India's manufacturing sector.



Viral Puzzle Stumps Internet Sleuths

A seemingly simple number puzzle has captured the internet's attention—and its collective frustration. Shared by Brainy Quiz, a popular account on X (formerly Twitter), the teaser presents a 3×3 number grid with one crucial blank square represented by a question mark. While it looks basic at first glance, solving the pattern behind the missing number has proven to be anything but easy. Brain teasers like this have long been a popular way for people to challenge their logic and sharpen their thinking. They offer a satisfying escape from daily routines and, more importantly, give your brain a much-needed stretch. For some, cracking these puzzles is a casual habit; for others, it's an obsession. And with social media offering instant access to global puzzles, communities now form around solving the toughest ones—just like this one. This latest viral grid has managed to hook everyone from casual browsers to self-proclaimed



math whizzes. Many report trying multiple patterns—adding, subtracting, multiplying rows and columns—only to come up short. What's maddening for many is the simplicity of the setup: how can something so compact stump so many people? Brainy Quiz dropped the teaser without an immediate answer, only encouraging users to "spot the pattern" and share their guesses. As replies flood in, so do a variety

of theories, some brilliant, some wildly off-track, and all part of the fun. The puzzle's virality proves once again that the internet loves a good brain challenge—especially when it's wrapped in the mystery of one little missing number. If you're brave enough to give it a go, dive in and join the thousands who've taken on the challenge. Just don't be surprised if you end up second-guessing yourself before that "aha!" moment hits.

Laid Off at 40? You're Not Alone

In a candid and timely reflection on today's job market, Bombay Shaving Company CEO Shantanu Deshpande recently addressed a growing and unsettling trend—professionals in their 40s facing layoffs across industries. Calling it a "global phenomenon," Deshpande highlighted how individuals in this age group, often in the peak of their earning years, are increasingly being let go by companies seeking to cut costs. Deshpande described the 40s to early 50s as a "golden salary period"—a time when professionals typically command high salaries after decades of experience. However, it's also when financial responsibilities tend to peak, with expenses like children's education, home loans, and elderly parents' healthcare pressing hard. Being laid off during this time can be not just a financial jolt but an emotional one too. The conversation struck a chord online, with many sharing personal stories. One Instagram user, Shweta Gadia, shared how she lost her job at 42 despite having an impressive professional profile. Since then, she's been struggling to find a role that matches her experience and expectations. Her story, among many others, reflects a larger shift in hiring dynamics—companies now often lean toward younger employees who cost less and are perceived as more adaptable in today's fast-changing digital environment.



Deshpande's post aims to shed light on what many professionals experience silently: the feeling of becoming "unhirable" after a certain age, not because of lack of skill, but due to shifting industry priorities. The CEO encouraged companies to take a more holistic view when hiring and retaining talent and emphasized the importance of upskilling, networking, and maintaining visibility in one's industry. The discussion underscores a need for open dialogue around age and employment—especially in a rapidly evolving market where even seasoned professionals are finding themselves on shaky ground.

Lazy or Smart? Porter Video Divides Internet

A light-hearted yet thought-provoking video shared on social media has sparked an online debate about convenience culture and customer expectations. A Porter delivery agent recently went viral after posting a clip narrating what he called an "amazing" order — delivering a small package from one tower to another in the same residential complex, barely a two-minute walk apart. The video, shared by user Azhar Jafri shows the delivery agent standing near Tower 17, from where he picked up the package. He then pans the camera to Tower 19, pointing out that it's hardly a short stroll away. The package contained a couple of game controllers, and the delivery agent quipped, "These people are so lazy," while showing the handoff location. The video's text overlay humorously read, "Porter mein aaya aalas ki delivery waala order" (A delivery order full of laziness came on Porter), poking fun at how hyperlocal convenience apps are now being



used for even the shortest of errands. The caption added by the uploader — "Lucknow ke nawab chale gaye, nawabi chhod gaye" (The Nawabs of Lucknow are gone, but their royal habits remain) — only added to the comedic spin, prompting laughs from some and raised eyebrows from others. While many found the situation funny and a bit excessive, others jumped to the customer's defense, noting that modern delivery apps are built on the promise of ul-

tra-convenience — and the customer was simply using a service they paid for. A few users even speculated that the delivery might have been requested for someone with mobility issues or time constraints. As debates swirl over whether this reflects peak laziness or smart use of tech, one thing is clear: what began as a simple two-minute delivery has become a reflection of the larger conversation on how far we're willing to go — or not go — for convenience.

Apple Leads Tech Rally on Tariff Relief

Apple shares surged over 6% in Frankfurt trading after the U.S. government granted tariff exclusions on smartphones, computers, and other electronics imported predominantly from China. The move sparked a broader rally in tech stocks across both U.S. and European markets, signaling investor optimism about easing trade tensions and cost pressures on consumer electronics. The tariff exemptions come as a relief for major tech manufacturers that rely heavily on Chinese supply chains. Apple, with a significant portion

of its production based in China, stands to benefit directly from the reduced import costs, potentially improving profit margins and stabilizing product prices for consumers. Other tech giants followed suit in the upward momentum. Nvidia climbed more than 3%, buoyed by strong AI demand and positive sentiment in the chipmaking sector. Dell Technologies posted a 6.3% gain, and Dutch semiconductor equipment maker ASML advanced 2.8%, reflecting broader investor confidence in the global tech ecosystem.

Raghunandan Kamath's Journey to Rs 300 Crore

From humble beginnings in a small Karnataka village, Raghunandan Kamath rose to become one of India's most beloved entrepreneurs, building Naturals Ice Cream into a Rs 300-crore brand without any formal education or aggressive marketing. Kamath, the son of a mango vendor, tapped into his roots and instincts to craft a business that combined tradition with innovation, creating a unique space in India's competitive ice cream market. After moving to Mumbai in his youth, Kamath joined his brother's restaurant business but soon realized his true passion lay in creating desserts, especially fruit-based ones. Drawing inspiration from his family's fruit-selling legacy, he began experimenting with seasonal fruits and natural ice creams—free from artificial colors and preservatives. In 1984, he opened his first Naturals



Ice Cream outlet in Juhu, Mumbai, with just five flavors: mango, sitaphal (custard apple), jackfruit, banana, and chikoo (sapodilla). It was a modest shop attached to his father's South Indian restaurant. What set Naturals apart was its commitment to quality and word-of-mouth marketing. Kamath believed the product would speak for itself, and he was right. As customers kept coming back for more, the brand grew steadily, driven by authenticity, consistency, and customer trust. Despite having no formal training in business or advertising, Kamath's

entrepreneurial instincts were spot on. Over the years, Naturals expanded across the country with over 150 outlets, retaining its family-run ethos and focus on fruit-based, handmade ice creams. Kamath's inspiring journey proves that success doesn't always follow a straight path through business schools or big capital. Sometimes, it's the taste of home, a dedication to quality, and a deep understanding of your roots that can turn mangoes into millions. Kamath passed away in May 2024, but his legacy continues to delight generations of ice cream lovers across India.



Netflix is reportedly experimenting with a new search tool powered by OpenAI, aiming to revolutionize how users discover content on the platform. According to The Verge, this AI-driven feature will allow users to search using natural language prompts, going beyond traditional filters like name, genre, or actor. This means that instead of typing in specific titles or actor names, viewers can describe what they're in the mood for — such as "a feel-good romantic comedy with a strong female lead" or "dark thrillers with plot twists like Gone Girl." The AI tool would then parse these prompts and deliver a curated list of matching content. The move is seen as part of Netflix's broader push to enhance user experience and content discoverability in an increasingly crowded streaming landscape. With thousands of titles available, many users often struggle to find

something that suits their mood or preferences — a gap this AI integration aims to bridge. The feature is reportedly still in its testing phase and may be rolled out to a limited number of users before a wider launch. It leverages OpenAI's advanced language model capabilities to interpret subtle emotional or thematic nuances in user queries — a significant leap from traditional keyword-based search engines. This marks one of the latest examples of how generative AI is being integrated into consumer platforms to personalize and simplify everyday digital experiences. While Netflix has yet to make an official announcement, the early buzz suggests that content discovery on the platform might soon get a lot smarter — and more intuitive. If successful, Netflix's AI-powered search could set a new standard for recommendation and discovery in the streaming world.



The tariff rollback is expected to alleviate some of the inflationary pressures that have been affecting the tech hardware market. Analysts note that the timing of this exemption is critical, as it may also influence pricing strategies ahead of key product launches and the year-end holiday season. Market watchers suggest that this policy shift could mark a more pragmatic trade stance by the U.S., at least in the tech sector, where global interdependence on manufacturing and innovation is deeply entrenched.



LSG Posts 166/7 Against CSK in IPL 2025

Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) set a total of 166/7 in their IPL 2025 match against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) on Monday. Captain Rishabh Pant was the standout performer for LSG, scoring 63 runs off 49 balls. Pant brought up his fifty in style with a one-handed six over deep mid-wicket. Opener Mitchell Marsh contributed with 30 runs off 25 balls. After being asked to bat first, LSG struggled in the early overs, losing two

wickets during the powerplay. The CSK seamers, Khaleel Ahmed and Anshul Kamboj, took one wicket each in the first six overs to put LSG on the back foot. Ravindra Jadeja, CSK's senior spinner, finished with figures of 2/24 in his three overs, helping to restrict LSG's scoring. Despite the setbacks, Pant's innings guided LSG to a competitive total. LSG: 166/7 in 20 overs (Pant 63; Jadeja 2/24).

ISSF South American Swing: Second Leg Begins in Lima



The second leg of the ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol/Shotgun stage kicks off in Lima, Peru, at the Las Palmas range on Tuesday. Close to 400 athletes from 43 countries, including a 35-member Indian team, will compete in 15 events across Rifle, Pistol, and Shotgun disciplines over the next week. India, which finished second to China in the first leg in Buenos Aires, Argentina, with four golds and eight total medals, is aiming to continue its strong per-

formance. The rivalry between the two nations is expected to heat up in Lima. Indian shooters to watch include Manu Bhaker, Suruchi, and Sainyam in the women's air pistol, and Saurabh Chaudhary, Varun Tomar, and Ravinder in the men's air pistol. The competition will feature top shooters from countries like China, the USA, Italy, Germany, and more. All finals will be streamed live on the official ISSF YouTube channel.

Uday Kumar Aims to Conquer World 10K Bengaluru with Unbreakable Spirit



Uday Kumar's journey is one of resilience, proving that true strength comes from within. A Kolkata-based contractual worker, Uday's life took a tragic turn during the 2015 Durga Puja holidays when an accident led to the amputation of his left leg. Despite being declared 91% disabled, Uday chooses to see himself as "91% abled," embodying the strength of human will. In the face of adversity, Uday found his passion in marathons. Since 2017, he has completed over 80 races across 16 states. His achievements extend beyond running—he has

conquered mountaineering feats like climbing Kanchenjunga and Mount Kilimanjaro, along with skydiving and scuba diving, earning the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award. Now, Uday is set to take on the TCS World 10K Bengaluru on April 27, 2025. After a personal best of 1 hour and 35 minutes in his first Bengaluru race, he is determined to beat his record and finish within 1 hour and 20 minutes. His story is a powerful reminder that the only limits we have are the ones we place on ourselves.

Alcaraz Triumphs in Monte Carlo, Clinches First Title

Carlos Alcaraz overcame a slow start to defeat Lorenzo Musetti 3-6, 6-1, 6-0 in the Monte Carlo Masters final, securing his first title at the prestigious event. The Spaniard's victory, his sixth Masters 1000 trophy, marks his first major win since his 2024 Wimbledon triumph. Musetti took an early lead, breaking twice in the opening set as Alcaraz struggled with his forehand. However, Alcaraz regained his composure in the second

set, hitting with more power and accuracy to win five consecutive games. Musetti, who had played several long matches earlier in the week, began to tire under Alcaraz's relentless pace. The final set was one-sided as Alcaraz broke early and took full control. Musetti's physical struggles were compounded by a medical timeout, and Alcaraz closed out the match for a dominant win, showcasing his resilience and skill on clay.



Diksha Dagar Posts Another Top-10 Finish at SA Women's Open

Diksha Dagar continued her strong form in South Africa, securing a Top-10 finish at the SA Women's Open with a final round of 4-under 68, totaling 8-under 280 for the tournament. Her rounds of 72-71-69-68 in windy conditions at Erinvale Country and Golf Estate marked her second consecutive Top-10 finish in South Africa, following a T-9 in Joburg. This performance adds to her solid season, which also includes a runner-up finish in Morocco and a T-11 in New South Wales.

Pranavi Urs also impressed, finishing T-11 with a 7-under total after shooting 69 on the final day. Rookie Avani Prashanth finished T-50 with an even-par total, while Tvesa Malik ended T-58. Frenchwoman Perrine Delacour claimed her second LET victory, finishing 14-under par, with Casandra Alexander and Kelsey Bennett following closely behind. Diksha Dagar, alongside Wales' Chloe Williams, rounded out the Top-10 at 8-under par.





Gulzar’s Daayra Revisits Hyderabad Tragedy

Meghna Gulzar is set to direct *Daayra*, a gripping crime drama inspired by the 2019 Hyderabad gang rape and murder case that shocked the nation. The film, produced by Jungle Pictures, stars Kareena Kapoor Khan and Prithviraj Sukumaran in lead roles. Announced recently, *Daayra* aims to take a realistic approach to the sensitive subject, portraying intense characters shaped by the horrific incident. Meghna, known for

her powerful storytelling in films like *Raazi* and *Sam Bahadur*, co-writes this project with Yash and Sima. Currently in pre-production, the film seeks to shed light on the social and emotional impact of the case, while also exploring justice and societal accountability. With a strong cast and Meghna’s impactful direction, *Daayra* promises to be a poignant and powerful cinematic experience, reigniting conversations on gender violence and legal reform.



Nani’s HIT 3 Promises Relentless Action



Starring Nani as Arjun Sarkaar, has arrived — and it’s a dark, intense ride from start to finish. Directed by Sailesh Kolanu, this gritty crime thriller begins with the harrowing abduction of a baby, setting off a brutal chain

of events where Sarkaar takes justice into his own hands. Nani portrays a cop who’s merciless with criminals yet composed in his personal life, showcasing a powerful duality that elevates the film’s emotional stakes. The trailer

teases a relentless manhunt filled with blood, vengeance, and raw emotion. His performance, especially in the climax, is described as goose-bump-inducing. The visuals are intense, the atmosphere is ominous, and the

action sequences are savage. Srinidhi Shetty plays Nani’s love interest, bringing a touch of warmth and charm to the otherwise grim narrative. *HIT 3** hits cinemas on May 1 and promises a gripping cinematic experience.

Nidhhi Agerwal Responds to Comparison

Actress Nidhhi Agerwal, known for her role in *iSmart Shankar**, is awaiting the release of her two big Telugu films. Though she rose to fame quickly, her journey slowed down, and comparisons with rising star Sreeleela began. Many fans have questioned why Sreeleela has done multiple films back-to-back while Nidhhi seemed to take a step back. Reacting to the comparison, Nidhhi responded on social media saying, *“After iSmart, I did a hero*

film, three Tamil films and signed HHVM. I take my time and pick scripts I believe in. I may go wrong sometimes, but I’m here to stay. Don’t worry about me.” Interestingly, while Sreeleela had a rapid rise, her recent flops have slowed her momentum. She currently has no major films lined up. On the other hand, Nidhhi has promising projects like **Hari Hara Veera Mallu** and **Raja Saab**, which could redefine her career path.



Kingston: A Haunting Sea Tale

Kingston, a Tamil fantasy horror adventure directed by Kamal Prakash, stars G.V. Prakash Kumar in his 25th film as an actor. The movie, which began streaming on ZEE5 yesterday, revolves around a coastal village, Thoovathur, and a haunting mystery tied to a man named Bosayya who was killed and buried by the villagers in 1982. After his watery burial, strange deaths of fishermen begin to occur, sparking fear of his vengeful spirit. King, the protagonist, grows up

with his grandfather after his father’s death at sea. As an adult, he works under a ruthless man named Thomas and becomes determined to bring peace to his people. Believing that removing Bosayya’s coffin from the sea will end the curse, he sets out on a dangerous mission with his friends. The film combines sea adventure with horror but lacks emotional depth and strong storytelling, making it a mediocre watch despite its interesting premise.

Ajith's 'Good Bad Ugly' Hits Century

Ajith Kumar’s latest action-comedy thriller **Good Bad Ugly** is storming the box office, entering the ₹100 crore club within just four days of its release on April 10. Directed by Adhik Ravichandran, the film showcases Ajith in a triple role — as Good, Bad, and Ugly — and has earned the highest opening day collection for a Tamil film in 2025, grossing ₹28.5 crore on day one across 2,400 shows.

The film, Ajith’s 63rd, received strong reception across Tamil Nadu and fea-

tures high-octane action sequences choreographed by international stunt experts. Trisha plays the female lead, while Arjun Das portrays the antagonist.

Good Bad Ugly was made on a grand budget of ₹270–300 crore. Netflix has acquired the digital streaming rights for a reported ₹95 crore, with streaming expected to begin in May. Trade analysts suggest that if current momentum continues, it could become one of the biggest Tamil hits of 2025.



Another Death Threat to Salman Khan



Bollywood superstar Salman Khan has once again received a serious death threat. A message was sent to the WhatsApp number of the Worli Traffic Department in Mumbai, stating, “Salman, we will kill you at your home or blast your car with a bomb.” Following this, the Worli police registered a case against an unidentified person and launched an investigation. Police are currently trying to trace the origin of the message and determine

whether the threat is genuine or a hoax. In the past, Salman Khan has faced multiple threats from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang. Due to ongoing security concerns, he is already under tight police protection. This latest threat has raised fresh concerns about his safety. Authorities are now reviewing his security measures to ensure his protection. The incident has shocked fans and industry members, who have expressed concern and support for the actor during this time.