



Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
H 35° C L 21° C	H 36° C L 23° C	H 36° C L 23° C

Waqf Amendment Bill to Be Tabled In Lok Sabha On Wednesday



- Bill proposes changes to laws governing Waqf boards
- Eight hours allotted for discussion in Lok Sabha
- Controversy surrounds inclusion of non-Muslims and women on Waqf boards

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CM Naidu's Clarifications on Welfare and Development Initiatives

DSC recruitment to be completed this month

- Focus on zero poverty in AP by 2029 with balanced development
- Chief Minister's pledge to build homes for all homeless within five years

TPN Correspondent | Bapatla

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has once again clarified that the Teacher Recruitment Test (DSC) will be completed this month, and teacher appointments will follow by June. Speaking during his tour of Bapatla district, he expressed satisfaction with the performance of public service employees and urged critics of his welfare programs to open their eyes.

While in Kothagollapalem, Naidu distributed pensions and interacted with beneficiaries, addressing their concerns. During his speech at the Prajavedika Sabha, he reiterated that people's welfare comes first. He also mentioned that pensions in AP are higher than those in Telangana, despite the latter's prosperity. Naidu confirmed that the much-awaited Polavaram project



would be completed by 2027 and that river-linking projects would be implemented. He stated that a railway zone would be set up for Visakhapatnam, and Rs. 11,000 crores have already been allocated for the Visakha Steel Plant. He also emphasized that his goal is to eradicate poverty in Andhra Pradesh by 2029 while balancing welfare and development.

In addition, the Chief Minister an-

nounced several initiatives, including a free gas cylinder every four months, remunerative prices for farmers' crops, and Rs. 20,000 financial aid to fishermen during the hunting ban. He highlighted the success of Dwakra communities, which now have Rs. 35,000 crore in savings.

Naidu also promised to provide housing for all homeless individuals within the next five years.



Dy CM Pawan Kalyan's Key Initiative to Support Livestock in Villages

- ₹12,500 water tanks for livestock under Employment Guarantee Scheme
- ₹56.25 crores allocated for construction of tanks
- Tanks to be completed and operational by April 15

TPN Correspondent | Andhra Pradesh

In a major step to ensure that livestock do not face drinking water shortages, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Pawan Kalyan has issued key orders for the construction of 12,500 water tanks across rural villages. This initiative, aimed at supporting farmers and their livestock, comes under the Employment Guarantee Scheme.

Speaking to the media, Pawan Kalyan highlighted the significance of this program, which will be implemented using funds from the Employment Guarantee Scheme. A total of Rs. 56.25 crores has been allocated to construct these water tanks, which will ensure a reliable water supply for livestock, especially during the challenging summer months. The Minister emphasized the urgency of the project, instructing officials to complete the construction of all 12,500 tanks by April 15, ensuring that they are fully operational in time for the summer season. This move aims to alleviate the strain on farmers who often struggle with water scarcity for their livestock during the hot months.

Pawan Kalyan further stated that the construction of these water tanks is part of the broader effort to enhance infrastructure in rural areas, alongside other initiatives like the creation of Gokulas and the digging of crop water tanks. He added that the state government, led by Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, is committed to improving conditions for farmers, with a focus on rural welfare. This program not only addresses immediate concerns regarding water availability for livestock but also contributes to the long-term development of rural infrastructure. By ensuring farmers' livestock have adequate water supply, Pawan Kalyan's initiative is set to boost the livelihoods of dairy farmers and strengthen agricultural practices in the region.

Salman Khan's Stardom: The Body That Built a Mythos
— OPINION —

NHAI Hikes Toll Charges by 4-5% Across India
— INDIA —

Imran Khan Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize Amid Incarceration
— GLOBAL —

- Professors at Nannayya University accused of sexual harassment
- Victims claim caste-based targeting and coercion for grades
- VC Prasanna Sri allegedly shielding accused professors
- Women's Cell inquiry criticized as biased and ineffective
- Students plan to seek justice from Minister Nara Lokesh

Allegations of Sexual Harassment by Professors at Nannayya University Spark Outrage



TPN K.S. Shekar | Rajahmundry

Adikavi Nannayya University in Rajahmundry, established in 2006 with PG and Ph.D. courses under its purview, has been marred by allegations of severe misconduct by two profes-

sors. Since 2011, all degree colleges in East and West Godavari have been affiliated with the university, which also provides special hostel facilities for students. However, the institution's reputation is now at stake due to serious allegations of sexual harass-



Dr. T. S. Narayana, Asst Professor, Telugu Dept



Dr. N. Raja sekhar, Asst professor Political Dept

ment and unethical behavior by two professors. According to complaints from students, Assistant Professor Dr. T.S.N. Satyanarayana of the Telugu department and Assistant Professor Dr. N. Rajasekhar of the Political Science department have been exploit-

ing their positions for years. Victims allege that the two professors often act in coordination, luring female students to their rooms with promises of better grades and special treatment.

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Nara Lokesh's Steps Toward Poverty Eradication: A Dream Come True for Mangalagiri's Poor

TPN Correspondent | Mangalagiri

Fulfilling a key election promise, Nara Lokesh is set to launch the first phase of house title distribution under the 'Mana Ilu-Mana Lokesh' initiative on April 3. This program aims to provide permanent rights to people living on government lands, a decades-old dream for the underprivileged residents of Mangalagiri. During the general elections, Lokesh had pledged to address these land issues, and now, his commitment is turning into reality.

Lokesh, who won with a record-breaking 91,413 votes, has personally overseen the process of gathering details from residents on government lands, ensuring a seamless application process. His efforts have also focused on resolving complicated issues related to forest and railway lands, which have been longstanding hurdles for many residents.

The first phase of the title distribution will benefit 3,000 families, providing them with regularized land titles and permanent ownership. The program will begin in Undavalli village, where the first house title will be handed over to a beneficiary on April 3. From April 4 to 12, the distribution will continue across several villages, including Yarrabalem, Neerukonda, Kaja, Penumaka, and Ippatam.

Senior leaders from coalition parties and local representatives who contributed to Lokesh's success will attend the distribution events. This initiative marks a significant step toward poverty eradication and economic empowerment for the people of Mangalagiri. Lokesh's dedication to addressing the needs of the poor has brought hope to thousands of families awaiting their rightful ownership of land.

Allegations of Sexual Harassment...

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Their misconduct appears to have targeted SC students, with offers of free meals, biryani, and even drugs as part of their manipulative tactics.

Several students who faced harassment eventually dropped out of their studies, unable to cope with the traumatic experiences. Despite a formal complaint filed with Vice-Chancellor Prasanna Sri, no substantial action has been taken. The students claim that the VC initially appeared supportive but later softened her stance, allegedly shielding the accused professors. The allegations include not only sexual harassment but also caste-based discrimination, with students being coerced and threatened if they refused to comply. One female student who reported the incident to the VC provided detailed evidence of harassment, yet no disciplinary measures were initiated. The university's Women's Cell, which was entrusted with the investigation, has reportedly conducted a biased inquiry, failing to consider the victim's testimony seriously.

It is also alleged that the professors are receiving protection from university authorities and the resident advocate, with efforts made to silence the victims and suppress the complaints. Reports suggest that some of the accused are threatening to expel students if they continue to pursue justice.

The victims are now considering approaching Education Minister Nara Lokesh directly to seek intervention in the matter. They hope that by bringing this issue to the attention of higher authorities, appropriate action will be taken against the accused professors and justice will be served.

The question remains whether VC Prasanna Sri will act decisively or if Minister Nara Lokesh will be compelled to intervene to ensure the safety and dignity of the students at Nannayya University.

Smart Ration Cards Will be Issued From May – Minister Nadendla Manohar

- New ration cards to be issued from May
- Deepam-2 second phase cylinder booking starts from April 1st
- Fine rice for mid-day meal scheme from June

TPN Correspondent | Amara-vati

The Andhra Pradesh government has announced a significant initiative to introduce ATM card-sized ration cards, aimed at enhancing convenience and security. State Food and Civil Supplies Minister Nadendla Manohar stated that the new ration cards will be issued from May, following the completion of e-KYC. These redesigned cards will feature QR codes and additional security measures, allowing for seamless addition, removal of family members, and card splitting.

Minister Nadendla clarified that the number of beneficiaries to receive these cards will be determined post e-KYC. The initiative is part of the government's efforts to streamline the ration card system and make it more user-friendly.

Meanwhile, the second phase of cylinder booking under the Deepam-2 scheme has commenced from April 1st. Minister Nadendla noted that three gas cylinders are being provided free of cost per year under this scheme, with gas companies reporting that 2 lakh new connections have been issued.



Additionally, the minister announced that fine rice would be supplied for the mid-day meal scheme starting from June. An investigation is underway into irregularities in the purchase of MDUs, with 35.93 lakh tonnes of paddy procured during Kharif. Minister Nadendla emphasized that payments are being deposited into farmers' accounts

within 24 hours of purchase, with WhatsApp-enabled transactions also being facilitated for 16,000 farmers. The minister further highlighted that Telangana has exported approximately 1.5 lakh tonnes of rice through Andhra Pradesh ports, with the Centre granting the necessary permissions for these exports.



SC Orders Dr. Padmavati to Appear in RRR Custodial Torture Case

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

In a major development concerning the custodial torture case of Deputy Speaker Raghuramakrishna Raju, the Supreme Court has ordered Dr. Padmavati to appear before the CID for questioning. Dr. Padmavati, who is accused of providing a false medical report, must meet with the investigating officer on April 7th and 8th at 10 AM. The Court issued a stern warning that her interim protection will be revoked if she fails to cooperate with the investigation.

During the hearing, government lawyer Siddharth Luthra presented evidence highlighting Dr. Padmavati's non-cooperation, which led to the Court's decision. The bench, comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Justice K. Viswanatham, emphasized the need for her compliance. Earlier, Dr. Padmavati had approached the Andhra Pradesh High Court for anticipatory bail, but her plea was rejected. She later moved the Supreme Court, which granted her interim protection. However, her failure to appear for the hearing prompted the government to seek the revocation of this protection. The case has now been adjourned to April 15th for the next hearing.

Home Minister Anitha Pushes for Completion of Drinking Water Project

TPN Correspondent | Visakhapatnam



Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha has taken a special initiative to expedite the completion of the ten-year comprehensive protected drinking water scheme aimed at providing water to 140 villages in Nakkapalli, Payakaraopet, and S. Rayavaram mandals. During a review meeting with National Highway officials and the District Collector, obstacles related to pipeline construction were cleared, promising progress on the project. The scheme, initiated under the previous TDP government, aimed to draw water from the Yeleru canal to Peta through pipelines, with motor installation

and shed construction at Sarabhavaram in Natavaram mandal. As the then MLA of Payakaraopet in 2017, Home Minister Anitha brought the matter to the attention of the then Panchayat Raj Minister Nara Lokesh, securing Rs. 51 crore under NRDWP. About 80% of the works, including water treatment tanks and storage tanks, have been completed. However, the remaining works stalled during the YS Jagan regime. Home Minister Anitha's recent efforts aim to resolve pending issues and complete the project soon with an investment of around Rs. 87 crore. This initiative is expected to provide water to an additional 130 villages, marking significant progress in the long-standing project.

Waqf Amendment Bill to Be Tabled In Lok Sabha On Wednesday

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Waqf Amendment Bill, which proposes significant changes to the administration of central and state Waqf boards, will be tabled in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, announced Union Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju. The bill, initially introduced in August last year, was subsequently referred to a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) for scrutiny.

The second half of the Budget session of Parliament, set to conclude on Friday, will see the bill discussed for eight hours after the Question Hour. The session duration may be extended at the discretion of Speaker Om Birla. The bill has sparked debates between the ruling BJP and opposition parties, with the latter alleging that the committee's chair rushed through proceedings without adequate consultation.

The JPC, comprising 16 MPs from the BJP and its allies and 10 from the opposition, submitted its report in February. The report proposed 66 changes, of which 23 were from the ruling party, while the remaining 44 were from the opposition. Only 14 of the 23 BJP-backed changes were ultimately cleared, while all opposition amendments were rejected.

The bill's original draft suggested nominating non-Muslim and at least two women members to each Waqf board, along with a Union Minister, three MPs, and individuals of national repute. There was also a proposal to limit donations from Muslims practicing their religion for at least five years. These changes have drawn strong criticism from opposition leaders, who claim the bill violates constitutional rights, including Articles 15 and 30.

Supporters of the bill argue that it aims to empower Muslim women and children and curb illegal land occupancy by Waqf boards. However, the controversy continues, with opposition leaders and community representatives raising concerns about infringement on religious rights.

TDP Supports Waqf Act Amendment Bill; Issues Whip for MPs' Attendance The TDP has announced its support for the Waqf Act Amendment Bill, directing all its MPs to be present in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. TDP Chief Whip Harish Balayogi issued a 3-line whip, emphasizing the importance of the bill's discussion.

The Modi-led NDA government will present the bill in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, with the Rajya Sabha discussion scheduled for Thursday. Eight hours have been allotted for discussions in both Houses. The BJP and Congress have also issued whips to their MPs to ensure attendance.

BEE Urges States to Strengthen S&L Program Implementation

TPN Correspondent | Vijayawada

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power has called upon State Designated Agencies (SDAs) and DISCOMs to aggressively promote the Standards & Labeling (S&L) Program for sustainable economic growth and environmental benefits. Following the successful collaboration with the National Testing House (NTH) under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, the initiative aims to enhance energy efficiency through stringent market surveillance and robust product testing.

The recent MoU between the Ministry of Power and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs empowers SDAs to monitor star-rated appliances and ensure compliance with energy efficiency standards. This partnership aligns with India's commitment to sustainable development and the Atmanirbhar Bharat mission. BEE Secretary Milind Deore emphasized the importance of maintaining product quality and efficiency through enhanced market surveillance.

Andhra Pradesh has emerged as a leader in promoting energy efficiency. APEPDCL, headquartered in Visakhapatnam, became the first DISCOM in India to introduce an e-retail facility for consumers via a strategic MoU with Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL). Through the 'Energy Efficient Appliance Programme,' consumers can purchase energy-efficient appliances via affiliate links on the DISCOM portal, with awareness campaigns ensuring maximum outreach.

The EESL Mart portal allows consumers to buy LED bulbs, BLDC fans, and energy-efficient air conditioners with doorstep delivery and reliable after-sales support. BEE commended this initiative as a major step toward consumer-centric energy efficiency.

According to BEE, India achieved substantial savings through the S&L Program in FY 2022-23, including electricity savings of 81.64 billion units, energy cost savings of ₹54,323 crores, and CO2 emission reductions of 58 million tonnes.



Minister Satyakumar Criticizes Doctors on Unnecessary Scanning and X-rays



- Health Minister urges doctors to treat patients with a humane approach
- Criticizes unnecessary scanning, X-rays, and increase in caesarean procedures
- Calls for patient awareness and compassionate treatment

TPN Correspondent | Vijayawada

AP Health Minister Satyakumar expressed dissatisfaction over the behavior of certain doctors, accusing them of conducting unnecessary scans and X-rays even when not required. He stressed that patients should be treated with a humane approach, criticizing the trend of performing caesarean deliveries instead of normal deliveries.

Speaking at the oath-taking ceremony of the new members of the AP Medical Council held at NTR University, Satyakumar attended the event as the chief guest. During his address, he remarked that doctors

often prescribe various tests for minor illnesses, creating unnecessary stress and tension among patients. He further pointed out that many patients mistakenly believe that doctors are providing better care when they order a multitude of tests. The Minister emphasized the need for creating awareness among people about unnecessary diagnostic procedures. Additionally, Satyakumar called on doctors to adopt a compassionate approach and greet patients with a smile. He stressed the importance of making patients feel comfortable and providing care with kindness and empathy.

YSRCP Leaders Demand SIT Probe and Justice for Naganjali's Family



TPN Correspondent | Rajahmundry

YSRCP State Women's President Varudu Kalyani, Official Spokesperson Shyamala, and Former MP Margani Bharat Ram visited the family of pharmacy student Naganjali, who attempted suicide and is undergoing treatment at Bollineni Hospital in Rajamahendravaram. They submitted a petition to the DSP, demanding immediate action and a thorough investigation.

Speaking on the occasion, Kalyani expressed her anguish over seeing Naganjali unconscious when she should have been completing her final year of pharmacy education. She emphasized that her pain is evident in her suicide note and blamed a person named Deepak for inciting the tragic incident. Kalyani questioned why the CCTV footage from the hospital has not yet been provided to the parents, even though the incident occurred 10 days ago. She stressed that the footage could clarify whether Naganjali administered the injection herself or if someone else was involved. Kalyani also criticized Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan, and the Home Minister for their silence on the matter. She vowed to continue fighting until justice is served to the victim's family and demanded better medical treatment for

Naganjali. YSRCP Spokesperson Shyamala echoed these concerns, expressing doubts about whether Naganjali administered the injection herself or if foul play was involved. She condemned the government's alleged reluctance to take decisive action and accused the coalition government of failing to ensure women's safety. Shyamala called for a thorough investigation and immediate justice for the victim's family. Former MP Margani Bharat Ram demanded stern action against Deepak, who is accused of torturing Naganjali. He questioned whether Deepak's uncle, who is allegedly affiliated with the ruling party, had been suspended or protected by the party. Bharat raised concerns over discrepancies in the police investigation and called for a comprehensive inquiry to uncover the truth. Naganjali's parents, still awaiting justice, tearfully demanded that their daughter be returned to them healthy and expressed frustration over the lack of progress in the investigation. Her classmates described Naganjali as a bright and dedicated student, confident that she would not resort to such an act with only a few months left to complete her course and receive a gold medal.

Vallabhaneni Vamsi's Remand Extended Till April 15th

TPN Correspondent | Vijayawada

The Gannavaram court has extended Vallabhaneni Vamsi's remand until April 15 in connection with a land dispute case registered at the Atkur police station. The case was filed based on a complaint from Sridhar Reddy, who alleged that his land was illegally acquired by Vamsi. Vamsi, who was already taken into custody for a day and questioned by the police in relation to the land acquisition case, continues to face mounting legal issues. Apart from this case, he is also accused in two other incidents involving criminal allegations.

One of the cases pertains to the attack on the Gannavaram TDP office, which led to significant unrest and concern among party members. Additionally, Vamsi is



accused of kidnapping and threatening a computer operator named Satyavardhan, who works at the TDP office.

The repeated extensions of Vamsi's remand underline the seriousness of the allegations against him. Police are actively pursuing investigations across all cases to establish the facts and proceed accordingly.

With his remand extended once again, Vamsi's legal troubles are far from over, as authorities continue to scrutinize the allegations related to land disputes and other criminal activities.

Raja Singh Appeals to Chandrababu Naidu, Nitish Kumar for Waqf Board Bill Support



TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

BJP leader and Goshamahala MLA Raja Singh has appealed to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to support the Waqf Board Bill. Singh emphasized that the Chief Ministers should show the courage to introduce the bill, asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made the right decision by bringing it forward. Raja Singh alleged that the Waqf Board had unlawfully seized lands belonging to temples, farmers, and poor people by issuing notices. He stated that the Central Government's proposed bill could effectively halt such acquisitions, thus providing relief to the affected parties.

In a separate development, MLA Raja Singh has written a letter to Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, seeking permission to conduct the Sri Rama Navami Shobha Yatra on April 6 without any hurdles. The procession is planned to start from Akashpuri Hanuman Temple and proceed to Sultan Bazaar. Singh noted that this annual procession has been held under his supervision since 2010, with no incidents reported in the past fifteen years. He emphasized that lakhs of devotees participate in the yatra with devotion and discipline every year. Singh urged the Chief Minister to grant permission for the event, highlighting its peaceful history and religious significance.

Supreme Court Serves Notices to Former AP CBCID Chief Sanjay

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Supreme Court has served notices to former Andhra Pradesh CBCID chief Sanjay in a corruption case involving the fire department. The notices were issued following the AP government's decision to challenge the anticipatory bail granted to Sanjay by the AP High Court.

The case against Sanjay was registered by the AP government, alleging corrupt practices during his tenure in the fire department. Dissatisfied with the High Court's decision to grant him anticipatory bail, the state government filed a petition in the Supreme Court, prompting the issuance of notices.

In a related development, former minister and YSRCP leader Kakani Govardhan is reportedly facing fresh legal trouble. Reports suggest that an SC/ST case has been registered against him under additional sections concerning a mining case. Allegations have surfaced that explosives were found at Rustom Wines, where tribals were allegedly detained.

Furthermore, accusations have emerged that Govardhan's followers threatened the tribals involved in the incident, intensifying the controversy. The latest developments have sparked a political stir, drawing widespread attention and prompting closer scrutiny from authorities.



AP High Court Makes Key Observations on Kakani Govardhan Reddy's Bail Petition

TPN Correspondent | Andhra Pradesh

The Andhra Pradesh High Court made significant observations during the hearing of former minister Kakani Govardhan Reddy's anticipatory bail petition in the illegal mining case. During Tuesday's hearing, Kakani's lawyers contended that the charges against him were not severe and requested anticipatory bail. However, the government lawyer informed the court that an SC/ST case had also been registered against Kakani. The court directed that the details of the SC/ST case be submitted to the petitioner and presented before the court. While Kakani's lawyers sought a directive to prevent his arrest, the court declined, citing previous orders prohibiting arrest in SC/ST cases. The government lawyer highlighted that

Kakani failed to appear for hearings despite receiving notices twice and was not cooperating with the investigation. The High Court adjourned the hearing to April 3, instructing both parties that the case would be thoroughly investigated on that date.

Meanwhile, Kakani is facing allegations of illegal looting of quartz ore from Rustom Mines in Podalukur mandal, Nellore district. An FIR has been registered against seven individuals, including Kakani. While two suspects have been arrested and remanded for 14 days, Kakani and four others remain absconding. Police have issued notices to Kakani twice. On the first attempt, they pasted the notice on the gate of his residence, but Kakani later shared photos on social media, indicating he was celebrating Ugadi with



family in Hyderabad. Despite another attempt by the police to serve notices in Hyderabad, Kakani remained unavailable. Kakani informed the police that he would be available for questioning from Thursday, citing his participation in a family function in Nellore on Wednesday. The police are now preparing to issue fresh notices to him.

MLA Bathula Balaramakrishna Reviews Water Supply and Irrigation Projects

TPN Correspondent | Rajanagaram

Rajanagaram MLA Bathula Balaramakrishna has instructed officials to ensure water supply issues are addressed proactively, keeping in mind the upcoming summer season. On Tuesday, he reviewed the progress of various water supply works with RWS engineering officials in the constituency.

He emphasized that all necessary steps should be taken to resolve water scarcity in areas such as Koonavaram, Gadarada, and Kanupur. Proposals are to be prepared to supply quality drinking water across all villages. The MLA directed officials to coordinate with the Electricity Department to resolve power issues affecting the Muggala Water Tank and Inaganti Vari Peta. Reviewing the construction of water tanks in areas like Jambupatnam, Narasapuram, Mukkinadapakalu, Mallampudi, and others, he ordered immediate commencement of pending works. Construction of



tanks and pipelines in Koti Kesavaram, Burugupudi, Narasapuram, and Muna-gala should be expedited once the tender process is completed.

Balaramakrishna highlighted that out of 19 works worth ₹12 crore, ₹7.89 crore worth of works have been partially completed, while the remaining ₹5.58 crore worth of works are pending due to technical reasons. He assured that pending approvals will be taken up with the government to expedite the tender process.

He also mentioned that works sanctioned under JGM worth ₹1.28 crore in Kesavaram, Burugupudi, Narasapuram, and Dosakaya Palli Munagala should proceed swiftly after tenders are finalized. For the borewell sanctioned under DMF with an estimated cost of ₹16.50 lakh in Chakradwara Bandham, works are expected to begin soon after tender finalization.

During a separate meeting on irrigation projects, Balaramakrishna instructed officials to prepare proposals for strengthening the Venkatanagaram pumping scheme. Due to improper management, irrigation water is not being effectively utilized under this scheme. Proper O&M proposals will be submitted to the government for necessary funding.

The meeting was attended by the Executive Engineer, Deputy Executive Engineer, and Assistant Engineer of the pumping scheme.

MIDH Aims to Develop Horticulture Sector, MP Kesineni Questions Support to Farmers

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Central Government's Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) has been striving to comprehensively develop the horticulture sector since 2014-15. Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Ram Nath Thakur, highlighted the scheme's objectives, adding that it is supplemented by initiatives such as the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) and Price Difference Compensation Payment (MIS-PDPS) to support horticulture farmers. However, Vijayawada MP Kesineni Shivanath (Chinni) raised questions in the Lok Sabha regarding the support provided by the Union Government to horticulture farmers, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, over the past five years. He called for more clarity on the government's efforts to aid these farmers. Studies conducted by organizations, including NITI Aayog, have evaluated the MIDH scheme. Key issues faced by horticulture farmers were identified, including inadequate remunerative prices, lack of storage facilities, marketing challenges, and water supply problems. To address these concerns, several initiatives have been introduced, including the establishment of Horticulture Excellence Centres (CoEs) to promote modern farming techniques, the Horticulture Cluster Development



Programme (HCDP) to foster market-oriented growth, and the Clean Plant Programme (CPP) to ensure the supply of disease-free plants. Additionally, Post-Entry Quarantine (PEQ) facilities aim to improve productivity through quality plant breeding. In Andhra Pradesh, significant progress has been made in horticulture production under MIDH. The state recorded 28,327 metric tons of production from 1,555 hectares in 2019-20, 26,766 metric tons from 1,553 hectares in 2020-21, 25,999 metric tons from 1,633 hectares in 2021-22, and 28,356 metric tons from 1,676 hectares in 2022-23. In 2023-24, 27,212 metric tons were produced from 1,676 hectares. The MIDH continues to evolve, aiming to resolve the ongoing challenges in the horticulture sector while promoting sustainable farming practices across India.

Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar Distributes Pensions in Rajupalem Village

TPN Correspondent | Rajupalem

Power Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar visited J. Panguluru Bhagwan Rajupalem village on Tuesday, where he distributed pensions to eligible beneficiaries. During his visit, the minister interacted with the villagers to understand their issues and concerns. While speaking to the villagers, Minister Gottipati inquired about their daily struggles and assured them of the government's support. One of the villagers requested help for constructing a still house, to which the minister responded by promising to provide raw materials for its construction. The minister also addressed

the long-standing needs of the village, assuring that a community hall and drains would be constructed to improve the infrastructure and living conditions in Rajupalem. Gottipati emphasized that the coalition government is committed to the welfare of the poor and has been working diligently to fulfill its election promises. He assured the people that the government would continue to prioritize their needs and fulfill the promises made during the election campaign. The minister's visit was met with appreciation from the villagers, who expressed hope for further development under the current administration.



Vijayawada Division Sets New Records In Freight Loading, Revenue & Punctuality

**Highest-ever originating freight loading of 38.322 million tonnes
Record freight revenue of ₹4239.74 Crore achieved
Best-ever punctuality performance of 80.19%**

TPN Correspondent | Vijayawada

The Vijayawada Division of South Central Railway has achieved its highest-ever performance in freight loading, revenue, and punctuality during the Financial Year 2024-25, surpassing previous records and setting new benchmarks. The Division recorded an originating freight loading of 38.322 million tonnes (MTs), breaking its earlier record of 38.169 MTs set in FY 2014-15. After a decade, this achievement highlights the Division's commitment to excellence in freight operations.

In terms of revenue, Vijayawada Division reported its highest-ever freight revenue of ₹4239.74 Crore, marking a 4.3% increase over the previous year's ₹4062.26 Crore. This accomplishment significantly contributed to the Division's gross revenue of ₹5836.61 Crore, a

3.8% rise from last year's ₹5625.42 Crore — the highest-ever in its history.

The Division also registered growth across various revenue streams, including:

- **Passenger Revenue:** ₹1386.14 Crore (0.12% growth from ₹1384.67 Crore last year)
- **Other Coaching Revenue:** ₹111.70 Crore (18% increase from ₹94.62 Crore)
- **Sundry Revenue:** ₹99.03 Crore (18% growth from ₹83.88 Crore)
- **Passenger Footfall:** 66.7 million passengers, a 4.8% rise from 63.6 million last year

March 2025 saw a record freight loading of 3.616 MTs, a 25.60% increase over March 2024's 2.879 MTs, surpassing the previous best of 3.550 MTs in March 2014. Additionally, a record 10,913 rakes were loaded throughout FY 2024-25.



Divisional Railway Manager Shri Narendra A. Patil congratulated the freight customers, passengers, and the Operating & Commercial teams, particularly acknowledging the leadership of Shri Rambabu Vavilapalli and Shri D. Narendra Varma. Despite challenges such as natural calamities, policy changes, and engineering block hours, the Division demonstrated resilience and commitment to service excellence. This record-breaking performance underscores Vijayawada Division's dedication to operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Awareness Session on POCSCO Case Investigation for N.T.R. District Police

TPN Correspondent | Vijayawada

In an effort to enhance the effectiveness of police duties and ensure better service delivery, the N.T.R. District Police Commissionerate, under the leadership of City Police Commissioner Sri S.V. Rajasekhara Babu IPS and Admin DCP Smt. K.G.V. Saritha IPS, organized a specialized training session for the officers and staff of the Vijayawada city police.

The session, conducted by ACP Sri B.Uma Maheshwara Reddy and his team, focused on the investigation procedures for POCSCO (Protection of Chil-

dren from Sexual Offences) cases. Special Public Prosecutor Mrs. Krishna Veni, a key resource in the training, provided a detailed explanation of the steps involved in investigating POCSCO cases, including the crucial phases leading up to the charge sheet.

A significant aspect of the training was the use of modern technology in collecting evidence at crime scenes. The officers were also educated on common mistakes made during investigations and how to avoid them. The training was made accessible to officers from the Nandigama, Mylavaram, and Thi-



rurur Sub-Divisions through a video conference. DCP Smt. K.G.V. Saritha emphasized that, due to various challenges, RC courses for staff had not been conducted in the last five years. However, under the initiative of Commissioner S.V. Rajasekhara Babu, these sessions are being rolled out to ensure police personnel have a thorough understanding of their responsibilities. She stressed

the importance of being fully knowledgeable about sensitive POCSCO cases and encouraged officers to address any doubts immediately to provide better service to victims and the public.

The session was attended by DCPs Smt. K.G.V. Saritha IPS, Shri A.B.T.S. Udaya Rani IPS, Shri Krishnamurthy Naidu, along with ACPs, Inspectors, and other officers.

Dist Collector Vetriselvi Orders Flawless Completion of Land Resurvey

TPN Correspondent | Eluru Dist

District Collector K. Vetriselvi has instructed officials to complete the land resurvey project in Madepalli without any shortcomings. On Tuesday, the Collector inspected the ongoing resurvey being carried out as part of a pilot project in Eluru Rural Mandal.

During the inspection, Vetriselvi questioned the officials about the number of people involved in the resurvey and the total acreage being surveyed. She also inquired whether the farmers had been notified in advance about the lands to be resurveyed.

Madepalli village has been selected for this resurvey pilot project, which covers 1,507 acres and 98 cents of land. The land will be divided into six blocks of 250 acres each for the resurvey process.

The Collector emphasized that the resurvey should be completed with precision and transparency. She was accompanied by Eluru RDO Achyut Ambareesh, Tahsildar Srinivas, Re Survey DT Nag-



amani, Panchayat Secretary Sumathi, village surveyors, mandal surveyors, and local farmers during her visit.

Vetriselvi's directive underscores the importance of accurate land measurement and the effective implementation of the resurvey, which aims to benefit local farmers and ensure clear land records.

Welfare Assistant Absconds with Pension Money in Kanchikacharla

TPN Correspondent | Kanchikacharla

A shocking incident occurred on Tuesday in Kanchikacharla when Welfare Assistant Thota Tarun Kumar absconded with ₹7.50 lakhs intended for pension distribution at the Town Secretariat-3. According to the Mandal Parishad Development Officer (MPDO), Thota Tarun, who had joined as a welfare assistant in July, was supposed to oversee the pension distribution this morning. However, when his phone was switched off, and his whereabouts became uncertain, the MPDO and officials traced his family, who revealed that he had last been in Kanchikacharla. This is not the first time Thota Tarun has been involved in such a scandal. Previously, he had absconded with pension money in Nemali village of Gampalagudem mandal, leading to his suspension. Despite this, the MPDO took immediate action and ensured the pension distribution continued without delay by collecting the money through alternate means. The MPDO has reported the incident to the relevant authorities, and a formal complaint has been filed at the Kanchikacharla police station. Authorities are now investigating the matter to apprehend the absconding welfare assistant.



Special Flower Offering to Durgamma on Vasanta Navratri

TPN Correspondent | Vijayawada

On the third day of Vasanta Navratri, 01 April 2025, a grand special flower offering was held at Sri Durga Malleswara Swamy Warla Devasthanam, Indrakiladri, Vijayawada. Devotees presented a variety of flowers, including yellow, white chamanthuli, and jasmine, to Goddess Durgamma in a sacred and vibrant ceremony. The flower offering began at 9 am at the newly constructed puja mandapam within the Nataraja Swamy temple premises. Priests and temple officials, carrying flowers in bamboo baskets from the main temple, arrived at the archana premises to commence the pooja. This significant event saw a large turnout of devotees who participated in the offering and had the opportunity to take darshan of the goddess.



Among the many participants were two foreign women from Tokyo, Japan, who were visiting Vijayawada. They had learned about the special pujas performed for Durgamma during the festival through interactions with locals. Deeply moved by the devotion, the visitors joined in the flower offering, sharing in the festive atmosphere and the glory of the god-

dess. The special flower offering is a key ritual in the ongoing Vasanta Navratri celebrations, which honor the divine energy of Goddess Durga. The festival, known for its cultural and spiritual significance, attracts a large number of devotees each year. This year's ceremony was marked by a blend of tradition and inclusivity, with partic-

ipation from people of diverse backgrounds, including foreign visitors. The event, conducted with devotion and reverence, highlighted the cultural unity and spiritual fervor of the people of Vijayawada, as they came together to celebrate the divine blessings of Goddess Durgamma during this auspicious festival.

Minister Sandhyarani Launches New Bus in Saluru



- New bus flagged off at RTC complex in Saluru
- Minister drives the bus to encourage drivers
- Improved roads and transport facilities for urban and rural areas

TPN Correspondent | Saluru

Andhra Pradesh State Women and Child Welfare and Tribal Welfare Minister Gummidi Sandhyarani launched a new bus service at the RTC complex in Saluru town on Tuesday. The Minister personally drove the bus, inspiring local drivers and

demonstrating her commitment to improving transport in the region. Speaking at the event, Minister Sandhyarani emphasized the government's dedication to providing better travel options for the public. She stated that new buses are being introduced at depots across the state

in a phased manner to ensure greater comfort and safety for passengers. The Minister highlighted the significant improvements in road infrastructure, noting that many potholed roads have been repaired, contributing to better travel conditions. She explained that these new buses will provide enhanced transport services to both urban and rural areas, helping to reduce travel costs and improve connectivity. Saluru Depot Manager D. Suryanarayana Murthy, Deputy Manager Karunasree, Deputy Superintendent Malleswara Rao, and other RTC staff members were present at the event.

Minister Subhash Launches Free Sewing Training, Tricycles, and Hearing aid Distribution Target of 1.75 Lakh Women Entrepreneurs Annually

TPN Correspondent | Ramachandrapuram

State Labor Minister Vasamsetty Subhash has set a target to provide self-employment opportunities to 1.75 lakh women across Andhra Pradesh every year. Speaking at a program held at the Kajuluru Mandal Praja Parishad Development Officer's office, the Minister emphasized the government's commitment to women's empowerment and the eradication of unemployment. Minister Subhash inaugurated the distribution of tricycles, hearing aids, NTR Bharosa pensions, and free sewing machine training programs. Six free sewing training centers have been established under BC Corporation Finance Welfare Limited in the Ramachandrapuram constitu-

cy, with two centers already operational. Each center will train 120 women, aged 18 to 50, over a period of 90 days, with morning and evening batches. Women attending at least 75% of the training will receive a free sewing machine and a certificate from the state government. The initiative also includes plans to ensure trained women receive clothing orders to boost their earnings. Additionally, free beauty parlor and embroidery courses



are being planned across the constituency. The Minister revealed that 180 widows in Ramachandrapuram have been identified for assistance, with plans to set up small and medium-sized industries and provide Rs. 300 per day through CSR funds for embroidery training. Special training programs in natural farming and skill development courses for those with Class 10, Intermediate, and Degree education will also be provided at VSM College, Ramachandrapuram. BC Corporation Executive Director A. Srinivas, District Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Project Officer P. Venugopal Rao, Kajuluru Tehsildar Ravindranath Tagore, MPDO Rambabu, and others participated in the program.

Nellore Dist Collector Reviews Summer Preparations to Prevent Heat-related Issues

TPN Correspondent | Nellore

In a proactive effort to address the challenges posed by the intense summer heat, Nellore District Collector Anand held a review meeting on Tuesday with officials from various departments. The session focused on taking preventive measures to ensure public safety during the upcoming hot months. The Collector stressed the importance of creating awareness in rural areas about the rising temperatures and heat waves. He directed Medical and Health Department officials to stock ice packs and ORS packets in all hospitals and emergency vehicles. The DWAMA officials were also tasked with ensuring drinking water and ORS availability for laborers working at employment guarantee sites.

To facilitate public comfort, the Collector instructed the RTC RM to establish cold storage at bus stands and provide water cans in buses. He also asked RWS officials to ensure that all village hand pumps are operational, with immediate repairs made where necessary. Furthermore, the District Agriculture Officer was told to provide fresh water to laborers working in agricultural fields, and the Electricity Department was urged to prevent power outages and short circuits. The

Animal Husbandry Department was asked to set up water tanks in areas frequented by grazing cattle. The Collector also requested the Information Department to launch an awareness campaign across media outlets about the precautions to take against the summer heat. He instructed district officials to establish at least ten cooling centers in their respective areas. The review meeting was attended by various officials, including the DRO, District Medical Officer, and representatives from the Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, RTC, Electricity, and DWAMA departments. A banner was also unveiled during the session, highlighting key sunstroke precautions.



Farmers' Association Demands Immediate Opening of Grain Purchase Centers

TPN Correspondent | Eluru

The Andhra Pradesh Farmers' Association District Committee has urged the state government to open grain and maize purchase centers immediately and provide a bonus of Rs. 500 per quintal to farmers. The demand was made during a meeting held at Anne Bhavan in Eluru on Tuesday, chaired by District President Katta Bhaskara Rao. District Secretary K. Srinivas, addressing the gathering, highlighted that the rabi grain harvest is underway, and maize crops are ready for threshing. He emphasized the need to start the grain procurement process without delay, stating that farmers should be provided with gunny bags as the harvest season is in full swing. He called for the government to



add a Rs. 500 bonus to the central support price for the procurement. Srinivas also criticized attempts to privatize the only oil-fed factory in Pedavegi, urging the government to allocate funds to replace the old factory with a new one, similar to what neighboring states have done for their agricultural industries. The meeting, attended by district leaders Kona Srinivasa Rao, Gundapaneni Suresh, and V. Rama Rao, passed several resolutions addressing key farmer issues in the region. The association is committed to pushing for these demands to ensure fair compensation and better facilities for the farming community.

MPs Meet Union Minister Rammohan Naidu to Discuss Airport Developments



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

BRS Parliamentary Party Leader K.R. Suresh Reddy, Deputy Leader Vaddiraju Ravichandra, Whip Diwakonda Damodar Rao, and Rajya Sabha Member Dr. Bandi Parthasarathi Reddy met Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram-

- MPs urge for speedy completion of Mamoonur (Warangal) airport
- Push for airport near Bhadradi Kothagudem to boost local economy
- Request for green signal for airports in Adilabad and Nizamabad

mohan Naidu on Tuesday evening in the Parliament premises. The MPs discussed several crucial issues regarding the establishment of airports in Telangana. During the meeting, the MPs urged Minister Rammohan Naidu to prioritize the resumption and completion of the Mamoonur (Warangal) airport. The airport, which was operational during the Nizam era, would greatly benefit passengers from Warangal and the surround-

ing districts. They emphasized the convenience it would bring to local commuters once flight services are reinstated. In addition, the MPs highlighted the need for the proposed airport near Bhadradi Kothagudem, a region home to significant industries like Singareni Collieries, Nava Bharat, ITC, and the Manuguru Heavy Water Plant. They also pointed out that the new airport would serve pilgrims visiting the Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Temple in Bhadrachalam, a prominent religious site known as Dakshina Ayodhya. The MPs also requested approval for airports near Adilabad and Nizamabad, to which Minister Naidu responded positively. The discussion emphasized the importance of improving transportation infrastructure to facilitate economic growth and regional connectivity.

Food Inspector Conducts Surprise Inspection at Bhimavaram Govt Hospital

TPN Correspondent | Bhimavaram

West Godavari District Gazetted Food Inspector Sundar Ramireddy conducted a surprise inspection at the Government Area Hospital in Bhimavaram on April 1, to assess the quality of food served to patients. He personally tested the meals provided and interacted with patients to gather their feedback on the food. Speaking to the media, Ramireddy explained that this inspection was part of a statewide initiative by the Andhra Pradesh State Commission of Food Safety to monitor the food served by diet contractors in both government and pri-

vate hospitals under Arogyasri. He emphasized that if any discrepancies were found, the food would be sent to the State Food Laboratory for further testing. "We will take corrective actions based on the test results," said Ramireddy. "If any quality standards are not met, we will not hesitate to bring the matter to the attention of the state commission and take appropriate action, including the potential cancellation of the contractor's license." The inspector assured the public that stringent measures would be enforced to ensure the

health and well-being of hospital patients.



MLA Kurugondala Ramakrishna Distributes Pensions in Venkatagiri

TPN Correspondent | Venkatagiri

Venkatagiri MLA Sri Kurugondala Ramakrishna distributed pensions to beneficiaries at 1st Ward, Bangarupet, Chavadi Street in Venkatagiri town, Tirupati district, on April 1. As per the instructions of Chief Minister Sri Nara Chandrababu Naidu, the MLA arrived at the location at 7:00 am and personally handed over the pensions to eligible beneficiaries. The event saw active participation from Tirupati Parliament members, Town Committee members,

Town Jana Sena Presidents, Local Ward Leaders, and Telugu Desam-Jana Sena-BJP leaders and activists. Numerous local leaders, youth, and residents also attended the program, appreciating the MLA's direct involvement in ensuring timely pension distribution.



Infant Kidnapping at Rampachodavaram Area Hospital Solved Swiftly

TPN Correspondent | Rampachodavaram

A swift police operation led to the successful recovery of a kidnapped infant from the Rampachodavaram Area Hospital on Monday. The incident occurred at 1:27 PM when the child was abducted by a woman whose identity was established through CCTV footage. By 2:15 PM, the hospital staff alerted the Inspector of Police about the kidnapping. The investigation commenced immediately, focusing on reviewing CCTV footage at the hospital, which provided a clear image of the suspect and confirmed the time of the inci-

dent. Further inquiries with hospital staff and nearby individuals revealed that the woman had left the hospital by auto-rickshaw at 1:30 PM. Police teams then examined CCTV footage at the local bus stand, establishing that the kidnapper reached the bus stand at 1:35 PM and purchased a ticket. Following this, all police personnel across the district, nearby districts, and state police were alerted. The DIG coordinated efforts from the Range office, forming multiple specialized teams for CCTV examination, APSRTC coordination, social media dissemination, and intelligence gathering.

By 3:10 PM, the suspect's photograph was distributed, and police teams began communicating with bus drivers. At 4:00 PM, a bus heading towards Bhadrachalam was intercepted by local police. The identity of the child was confirmed and the accused was detained.





INDIA bloc as a beginning of democratic renewal

The fight to preserve India's democracy and constitutional ethos demands a departure from conventional politics, as the ruling party thrives on centralization and the erosion of institutions, narratives, and decision-making processes. To counter this, the Opposition must champion decentralization, foster open dialogue, uphold norms, and prioritize listening over dictating, argues a fresh perspective on India's political landscape as of April 1, 2025.

The Bharat Jodo Yatra and Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, spearheaded by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi—now the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha—exemplified this alternative. Unlike the ruling party's tightly controlled campaigns, these yatras embraced a fluid, participatory model. Leaders engaged directly with communities, listening as much as they spoke, allowing citi-

zens to co-shape the narrative rather than passively absorb pre-packaged pledges. This stood in sharp contrast to the centralized, top-down approach of the ruling dispensation, which leans on subversion and narrative dominance.

The yatras demonstrated that a politics of empathy and inclusion can resonate, cutting through the noise of orchestrated propaganda. They offered a glimpse of how decentralization—giving voice to the grassroots—could challenge the ruling party's grip. Yet, despite their impact, the Opposition has been slow to fully adopt this blueprint. Traditional politicking—marked by reactive rhetoric and insular strategies—persists, diluting the potential of such transformative experiments.

To win, the Opposition must internalize this

lesson: democracy's defense lies in mirroring its values—openness, plurality, and respect for institutions—rather than mimicking the ruling party's playbook. The yatras' success wasn't just in mileage covered but in trust rebuilt, showing that people crave dialogue over diktats. This requires a shift from leader-centric campaigns to a movement where communities drive discourse, a stark pivot from the ruling party's reliance on centralized authority.

As of April 1, 2025, the stakes are high. The ruling party's model thrives on control; the Opposition's strength lies in relinquishing it. Embracing this paradox—listening before speaking, decentralizing before commanding—could redefine the battle for India's soul, ensuring constitutional values endure not through politics as usual, but through a reimagined, people-first approach.



\$1.7 Trillion: Why Investors Are Betting Big On US Despite Recession Fears

Despite recession whispers and President Donald Trump's tariff turbulence, the US has secured \$1.7 trillion in investment commitments since his second term began on January 20, 2025, signaling robust faith in its economic future as of April 1. Giants like Apple, TSMC, and Saudi Arabia are driving this influx, betting on long-term gains despite short-term chaos. Syed Zubair Ahmed explores why investors remain bullish.

In under three months, standout pledges include Saudi Arabia's \$600 billion (potentially \$1 trillion) over four years, Apple's \$500 billion for AI infrastructure and 20,000 jobs, and a \$500 billion StarGate project by OpenAI, Oracle, and SoftBank to dominate AI. TSMC's \$100 billion adds to its \$165 billion US total, while Eli Lilly (\$27 billion) and Hyundai (\$21 billion) bolster manufacturing. These moves, tied to Trump's "America First Investment Policy," aim to secure semiconductors and tech supremacy, countering China.

Trump's tariff bravado—set to escalate April 2—has rattled markets, yet his knack for luring capital shines. Infrastructure, AI, and chip production could cushion a downturn, reinforcing the US as an innovation hub. Critics, however, question if these billions will materialize, recalling unfulfilled Saudi promises from his first term. FDI has historically wavered, and lofty announcements often shrink under scrutiny.

Economic headwinds loom: inflation persists, interest rates bite, and the dollar recently slumped 3.4%. Germany's spending surge and Trump's "transition" talk—echoed by Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's "detox" warning—add uncertainty. Investors love tax cuts but hate unpredictability, and Trump's trade flux keeps them guessing.

Still, Trump 2.0 exudes aggression. His "economic nationalism" pushes onshoring and tariffs, pressuring allies into deals. Supporters see a strongman delivering results; skeptics see hype. Will Apple's factories rise in Houston? Will TSMC's chips roll out of Texas? Or is this another mirage? As of April 1, 2025, \$1.7 trillion hangs on Trump's ability to turn pledges into reality amid a jittery global landscape. Time will tell if this gamble pays off—or fizzles like before.

Yunus' Remarks on Chicken's Neck Ignite Fury in India



Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus stirred outrage in India with comments spotlighting the landlocked Northeast and the strategic Chicken's Neck corridor. Speaking during a visit to China, Yunus called the seven Northeastern states—termed the "Seven Sisters"—a landlocked region, positioning Bangladesh as their "guardian of the ocean." He suggested this could extend China's economic reach, a remark that has inflamed tensions given Delhi's fraught ties with Beijing post-Doklam and cooling relations with Dhaka since Sheikh Hasina's ouster. The Chicken's Neck, or Siliguri Corridor, is a slender 20-km-wide strip in West Bengal linking India's Northeast to the mainland. Flanked by Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, it's the sole land route for road and rail to the region. Its vulnerability was laid bare in the 1962 Sino-Indian War, when China's advance underscored the risk of a chokehold isolating the Northeast. The 2017 Doklam standoff, where India halted China's road-building near Bhutan, further highlighted its sensitivity, ending in a tense disengagement. Yunus' remarks come as Bangladesh's in-

terim government, in power since Hasina's exit last year, pivots toward China, unsettling India. Historically, Delhi enjoyed warm ties with Dhaka, rooted in the 1971 Liberation War, but recent minority attacks and Bangladesh's outreach to Beijing have strained this bond. Yunus' China trip, including a meeting with Xi Jinping, amplifies India's security concerns over the Chicken's Neck, a lifeline now under geopolitical scrutiny. Indian leaders reacted swiftly. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma slammed the comments as "offensive," urging robust rail and road upgrades to bolster the corridor, warning of its persistent vulnerability. Congress leader Pawan Khera accused Bangladesh of inviting China to encircle India, blasting the BJP's "deplorable" foreign policy for failing the Northeast. "A country we helped create is now trying to surround us," he said. As of April 1, 2025, Yunus' words have thrust the Chicken's Neck into focus, exposing India's strategic anxieties amid shifting regional dynamics and an emboldened Sino-Bangladesh axis.



Salman Khan's Stardom: The Body That Built a Mythos

Salman Khan's allure as a Bollywood icon hinges on his chiseled physique, a symbol of cinematic masculinity that fans worship as the essence of stardom. As Yvonne Tasker notes in *Spectacular Bodies*, an action hero's frame is more than flesh—it's a layered emblem of power and contradiction. Khan embodies this, his brawn eclipsing dialogue, his blue bracelet a style hallmark. From his debut, he turned gyms into shrines, his body outshining his acting, a true-blue star serving and served by his physicality. The 2014 documentary *Being Bhaijaan* captures this reverence, opening with Khan's sculpted form dominating the screen. It shifts to Shan, a fan from Chhindwara, sweating in a gym, dreaming of mirroring his idol. The film subtly elevates Shan, blurring the star-fan divide, as devotees like him reflect Khan's myth through their own fixation. Unlike Shah Rukh's urban charm or Aamir's cerebral appeal, Khan's kingdom thrives in India's hinterlands—small towns, slums, and mohallas—where his rugged hope resonates with the marginalized, especially working-class Muslims sidelined by post-lib-

eralization dreams. Shohini Ghosh ties Khan's 1990s rise to communal tensions, as Muslims faced alienation amid the Hindu Right's ascent. His "bad boy" image—marred by legal woes—mirrored their vulnerability, forging a visceral bond. Eid releases transcend films; they're communal affirmations, his body a canvas of defiance and triumph. *Being Bhaijaan* probes this masculinity, with fans like Shan and Balram internalizing Khan's macho ideals—protection, stoicism—shaping their gender views, sometimes conservatively. Yet, this devotion carries a homoerotic edge, a "Bhai-code" where fans' intense loyalty—chanting "Jai Salman"—binds them in brotherhood. Khan's body, not the heroine, holds their gaze. This fandom, though fierce, falters when his actions—like his 2014 Modi tie-up—jar their ideals, as seen in Jai Ho's tepid response. Richard Dyer's lens on stardom's fragility fits here: Khan's image, built on muscle and myth, shifts with time. His latest Eid flop, *Sikandar* (April 2025), underscores a fading vigor, his once-unstoppable frame now hinting at decline—a true-blue star whose descent is as iconic as his rise.

India and Chile Strengthen Ties on Critical Minerals and Trade

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a joint press address with Chilean President Gabriel Boric Font at Hyderabad House on Tuesday, announced that India and Chile would initiate discussions on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), with a significant focus on critical minerals, trade, and economic cooperation. Emphasizing the importance of resilient supply and value chains, PM Modi highlighted that both nations are committed to forming a mutually beneficial economic partnership. He further stated that India is ready to share its expertise in digital public infrastructure, renewable energy, railways, space, and other sectors with Chile.

As part of their collaboration, India and Chile signed a Letter of Intent recognizing Chile's strategic role as a gateway to Antarctica. Given its geographic proximity and the presence of key cities like Punta Arenas, Chile serves as a major departure point for expeditions and scientific research in Antarctica. PM Modi welcomed the agreement and expressed confidence that it would enhance bilateral cooperation in this critical area.

Health security also featured prominently in discussions, with both leaders acknowledging India's role as a reliable partner in providing medical support to Chile. PM Modi expressed happiness over the growing adoption of yoga in Chile and praised the country's decision to declare November 4 as National Yoga Day. He also highlighted the importance of Ayurveda and traditional medicine, calling for greater collaboration in these fields. The deepening of defence cooperation between the two countries, which



symbolizes mutual trust, was also discussed. Welcoming President Boric on his first visit to India, PM Modi lauded his commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and described Chile as an important partner in Latin America. During their discussions, the leaders explored new opportunities for investment and trade, recognizing that there is untapped potential for collaboration in various sectors. PM Modi noted the steady growth in mutual trade and emphasized that further strengthening economic ties

would be beneficial for both nations. In the agricultural sector, both countries agreed to collaborate on ensuring food security by leveraging their respective strengths. India committed to sharing its experience and technological advancements to support Chile's agricultural industry. The discussions also focused on expanding cooperation in renewable energy, railways, space, and digital public infrastructure, reflecting India's commitment to fostering innovation and economic growth in Chile.



Himanta Slams Yunus' Remarks, Calls for NE Bypass

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has strongly condemned Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus' recent remarks on India's Northeast, calling them "offensive and strongly condemnable." Yunus, during a recent four-day visit to China, reportedly described Bangladesh as the "only guardian of the ocean" in the region and suggested that India's northeastern states being landlocked could be an opportunity for Chinese economic expansion. Taking to social media on Tuesday, Sarma lashed out at Yunus' statement, emphasizing that such comments should not be taken lightly as they reflect "deeper strategic considerations and longstanding agendas." Sarma further pointed out that this narrative reinforces the strategic vulnerability of India's 'Chicken's Neck' corridor—the narrow Siliguri Corridor that connects the Northeast to the Indian mainland.

Yunus' comments, which surfaced on social media, implied that the northeastern states lack direct ocean access, making Bangladesh a key maritime link for them. "The seven states of India, the eastern part of India, are called the seven sisters. They are a landlocked region of India. They have no way to reach out to the ocean," Yunus reportedly stated. He also suggested that Bangladesh's role in the region could be leveraged for economic expansion with China's involvement.

Sarma responded sharply, highlighting the historical vulnerability of the 'Chicken's Neck' corridor and warning against narratives that could fuel separatist ideas. He noted that even within India, there have been dangerous discussions about isolating the Northeast from the rest of the country, making it essential to strengthen transport infrastructure.

To counter this strategic concern, Sarma advocated for the development of alternative railway and road networks bypassing the Chicken's Neck corridor. Despite significant engineering challenges, he urged that India must push for innovative and determined efforts to enhance connectivity between the Northeast and the mainland.

NHAI Hikes Toll Charges by 4-5% Across India



Commuters using national highways and expressways in India will now have to pay higher toll fees, with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) announcing an increase of 4-5% in toll charges. This revision, which came into effect on April 1, 2025, is part

of the NHAI's annual process of adjusting toll rates in response to changes in the wholesale price index-based inflation. The toll fee hike will apply to various highway sections across the country, impacting a significant number of road users. This increase in

toll charges aims to account for rising operational and maintenance costs associated with the upkeep of the national highway network. As per NHAI officials, the revised toll rates will help sustain the infrastructure, ensure road safety, and support ongoing and future highway development projects.

The toll fee adjustment is a routine exercise conducted by the NHAI, and the revised rates reflect the current economic conditions, especially inflationary trends. The NHAI has clarified that the adjustments are necessary to maintain and upgrade India's national highway system, which is crucial for the transportation of goods and people across the country. For many road users, this hike may come as an additional financial burden, especially for frequent travelers. The increase is expected to affect commercial vehicles, daily commuters, and long-distance travelers who rely on the extensive highway network for their journeys. Despite the hike, the NHAI emphasized that the toll rates remain competitive and are in line with inflation adjustments to ensure the sustainable development of India's road infrastructure.



Netherlands FM Veldkamp Visits India to Boost Ties

Caspar Veldkamp, the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands, is on his first official visit to India from March 31 to April 1, 2025, aiming to strengthen bilateral relations across multiple sectors, including trade, innovation, and security. His discussions with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar focused on expanding cooperation in emerging fields like semiconductors, green hydrogen, and digital technologies, alongside traditional areas such as water management, agriculture, and health.

The two leaders held delegation-level talks on March 31, where they reviewed the growing political, cultural, and economic ties between India and the Netherlands. Both countries have maintained a strong partnership for over 75 years, and this visit is expected to further enhance economic and strategic cooperation. The discussions also covered key global and regional developments, reflecting the evolving geopolitical landscape and the importance of multipolarity in international relations.

Jaishankar welcomed Veldkamp and emphasized the depth of India-Netherlands collaboration, stating, "Delighted to meet FM Caspar Veldkamp of the Netherlands. We discussed our growing cooperation in trade, investments, innovation, water, agriculture, health, security, and people-to-people ties. We also explored new possibilities in semiconductors, green hydrogen, education, and talent flows." Foreign Minister Veldkamp, ahead of his visit, expressed enthusiasm about enhancing collaboration with India, particularly in the context of today's complex geopolitical challenges. "Considering today's geopolitical reality, it is important for both the Netherlands and India to strengthen our cooperation and deepen our relationship," he posted on social media.

India's 'Operation Brahma' Delivers Aid to Myanmar

India has launched a massive humanitarian relief effort, sending 440 tonnes of essential supplies to earthquake-hit Myanmar as part of 'Operation Brahma.' On Tuesday, the Indian Navy's INS Gharial departed from Visakhapatnam for Yangon, carrying a large consignment of relief materials, including rice, edible oils, and medicines. The shipment is equivalent to nearly 45-48 truckloads of aid, reinforcing India's commitment to assisting its neighbor in the wake of the devastating March 28 earthquake.

In addition to INS Gharial, two other Indian Navy warships, INS Karmuk and LCU 52, arrived in Yangon earlier the same day with approximately 30 tonnes of relief supplies. These ships joined the ongoing relief mission, which had already seen INS Satpura and INS Savitri deliver 40 tonnes of humanitarian aid to Myanmar on Monday. Apart from naval support, an Indian Air Force C-130 aircraft also landed in Mandalay, transporting essential medical supplies, water, and diesel generators to assist in the recovery efforts.

The Indian Embassy in Myanmar confirmed on social media that 'Operation Brahma' was launched immediately after the earthquake



struck, with a focus on providing emergency assistance to the hardest-hit regions, including Sagaing, Mandalay, Naypyidaw, Shan, and Bago. India's rapid response included deploying search and rescue teams, medical professionals, and emergency supplies such as food, water, tents, and medicines.

The relief efforts began on March 29, when an Indian Air Force aircraft delivered the first batch of 15 tonnes of humanitarian assistance to Yangon. The supplies were officially hand-

ed over by Indian Ambassador to Myanmar, Abhay Thakur, in the presence of Myanmar's Chief Minister U Soe Thein. On the same day, two more C-130 and two C-17 aircraft flew into Naypyidaw, carrying an 80-member National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team, a 120-member Indian Army medical team, and an additional 85 tonnes of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) aid. Notably, these were the first international aid flights to arrive in Myanmar's capital, Naypyidaw.

'Time for reciprocity': US flags India's 100% tariff on agri goods ahead of April 2 deadline

- **New tariffs aim to ensure fairness, details due Wednesday, says White House.**
- **Trump calls April 2 "Liberation Day," vows to fix unfair trade practices**
- **Advisors like Lutnick, Bessent, and Vance back Trump's trade overhaul plan.**



TPN Correspondent | Kathmandu

The White House has spotlighted India's 100% tariff on American agricultural products as a key grievance, accusing New Delhi and other nations of stifling U.S. exports with exorbitant levies. With a deadline looming on April 2, 2025, President Donald Trump has vowed to implement reciprocal tariffs, dubbing the date "Liberation Day" for the U.S. economy. The move, flagged as a "big game-changer," aims

to counter what Trump calls unfair trade practices that have long disadvantaged American workers. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, speaking on Monday, April 1, criticized the steep tariffs imposed by multiple countries, including India's 100% duty on U.S. agri-goods, Japan's 700% on American rice, the EU's 50% on dairy, and Canada's nearly 300% on butter and cheese. "These countries have been ripping off our nation for far too long," Leavitt said, display-

ing a chart with India's tariffs highlighted in tricolor circles. She argued that such barriers make it "virtually impossible" for U.S. products to penetrate these markets, costing American jobs and businesses over decades.

Trump has described current U.S. tariffs as "temporary" and "small," promising that the new, reciprocal tariffs—set to roll out on April 2—will level the playing field. While specifics remain under wraps, Leavitt emphasized that

the policy would ensure fairness for Americans, with the President slated to unveil details on Wednesday. "It's time for reciprocity," she declared, framing the shift as a historic correction championed by Trump. The initiative is backed by a robust team of advisors, including Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, and others like Peter Navarro and Kevin Hassett, with Vice President J.D. Vance also deeply engaged. Leavitt sidestepped questions on which nations would face the new tariffs, leaving that to Trump's forthcoming announcement. As tensions simmer ahead of the deadline, the U.S. stance underscores a broader push to rebalance trade dynamics, with India's agricultural tariffs now a flashpoint in the escalating rhetoric. The clock is ticking toward a policy shift that could reshape global trade ties as of April 1, 2025.

Imran Khan Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize Amid Incarceration



TPN Correspondent | Islamabad

Imran Khan, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan and founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, has received a second nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize. Khan, who has been imprisoned since August 2023, was put forward for the prestigious award due to his contributions to human rights and democracy in Pakistan. The nomination was announced by Partiet Sentrum, a Norwegian advocacy group, which collaborated with an individual authorized to nominate candidates for the prize.

In a statement shared on X on Sunday, Partiet Sentrum expressed pride in nominating Khan, emphasizing his efforts to advance democratic principles and protect human rights in his home country. "We are pleased to announce on behalf of Partiet Sentrum that in alliance with somebody with the right to nominate, we have nominated Imran Khan, the former prime minister of Pakistan, to the Nobel Peace Prize for his work with human rights and democracy in Pakistan," the group declared. This marks the second time Khan has been recognized as a contender for the award, highlighting his enduring influence despite his current legal challenges.

The Nobel Peace Prize nomination process allows submissions from a wide range of "qualified nominators," including members of national assemblies, government officials, and other designated individuals or organizations. This broad eligibility ensures that diverse voices can propose candidates they believe have made significant contributions to peace and justice. Khan's nomination reflects his reputation as a leader who championed political reform and social equity during his tenure, even as his incarceration has sparked debate about the state of democracy in Pakistan.

Yunus Courts China, Stirs Tensions with India Over Northeastern States



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Bangladesh's interim government adviser, Muhammad Yunus, sparked controversy during a recent four-day visit to Beijing by subtly urging China to "extend" its influence in the region, leveraging the landlocked status of India's northeastern "seven sister states." In a video that surfaced on social media upon his return, Yunus suggested that Bangladesh, as the "guardian of the ocean" for India's northeast, could serve as a strategic base for China. He framed this as an economic opportunity, encouraging Beijing to build infrastructure, market goods, and export through Bangladesh, indirectly pressuring India's isolated states.

"The seven states of India... are completely landlocked. They have no way to reach the ocean. We are the only guardian of the region," Yunus stated, adding that this "opens up a huge possibility for China." Defence analysts criticized the remarks as provocative, while Sanjeev Sanyal, a member of PM Modi's economic advisory council, questioned their intent on X, asking, "What exactly is the significance of 7 Indian states being landlocked?"

During his Beijing visit, Yunus held talks with Xi Jinping, securing agreements to deepen China-Bangladesh ties. These include Chinese investment in modernizing Mongla Port with \$400 million, expanding the China Economic and Industrial Zone in Chattogram with \$350 million, and \$150 million for technical assistance. Yunus also sought a 50-year partnership on river water management, praising China as a "master" in the field. Bangladesh requested aid for managing the Teesta River, shared with India, shifting away from previous direct cooperation with New Delhi, and signed a hydrological data-sharing deal for the Yarlung Zangbo-Jamuna River.

The remarks and agreements signal a strategic pivot toward China, raising eyebrows in India. While Yunus thanked Beijing for enhancing maritime and economic collaboration, his comments about India's northeast have drawn scrutiny. As of April 1, 2025, this development underscores Bangladesh's balancing act between its powerful neighbors, with Yunus seemingly testing New Delhi's patience while courting Chinese investment to bolster Dhaka's regional clout.



Chile's President Boric Highlights Expanding Ties with India During Visit

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

During his visit to India, Chilean President Gabriel Boric underscored the burgeoning potential for deepening bilateral ties with India, spotlighting trade, investment, and joint efforts on global issues like climate change. Speaking alongside Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House on April 1, 2025, Boric expressed gratitude for the invitation extended during the G20 summit in Rio last November, emphasizing the untapped possibilities in the seven-decade-long relationship between the two nations.

Boric, the third Chilean president to visit India in 16 years, hailed the visit as a milestone in consolidating ties. "We have come to strengthen seven decades of relations with India," he said, noting India's rise as Chile's seventh-largest trading partner. He urged further collaboration, particularly in commercial ties and critical minerals like lithium and copper, vital for sustainability and combating climate change. "We discussed investment opportunities and the role of critical minerals in facing global challenges," Boric remarked, framing these as key to a sustainable future.

The leaders also explored cooperation in technology and innovation, with Boric positioning Chile as a reliable partner. "We want to consolidate Chile as a trusted ally in sustainable technology and innovation, where we see immense potential with India," he said. He highlighted cultural exchanges too, citing the "Shoot in Chile" program to attract India's Bollywood industry, adding, "What India has done with Bollywood is tremendously important."

Boric praised Chile's international standing as a respected democracy, a foundation for attracting investment and fostering ties. Beyond economics, he emphasized the cultural and spiritual dimensions of the partnership. "It's not just about commerce but also culture and spirituality. India's ancient civilization offers lessons for the world," he noted.

The visit reflects a shared vision for a multifaceted relationship, blending economic goals with sustainability and cultural synergy. Boric's remarks signal a forward-looking agenda, leveraging India's global influence and Chile's strategic resources to address modern challenges while deepening a historic bond as of April 1, 2025.

Netanyahu Retracts Shin Bet Nominee Amid Coalition Tensions

TPN Correspondent | Israel

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reversed his decision to appoint ex-admiral Eli Sharvit as director of the Shin Bet security service on April 1, 2025, just 24 hours after announcing it. Netanyahu's office stated that, "after further thought," he informed Sharvit of plans to consider other candidates to succeed Ronen Bar, whose dismissal last month awaits court approval. No specific reason was provided for the abrupt shift, though it follows unease within Netanyahu's religious-right coalition. Some coalition members had opposed Sharvit's nomination, pointing to his alleged presence at a 2023 protest against the government's judicial overhaul—a move that sparked controversy. The Shin Bet, akin to the FBI or MI5, handles



internal security, distinct from Mossad's external intelligence role. Netanyahu's decision to sack Bar had already fueled backlash, with critics accusing him and his allies of purging officials who challenge their stance, particularly on the Gaza war against Hamas. The reversal coincides with brewing discord in Netanyahu's multi-party coalition. Finance

Minister Bezalel Smotrich staged a temporary resignation, a procedural tactic to reclaim his Knesset seat and edge out a member of National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir's party. Israeli media reports suggest Smotrich expects Netanyahu to reappoint him once his parliamentary status is restored. His move protests Ben-Gvir's push for additional ministerial roles after rejoining the government last month, according to Reuters, citing Smotrich's party spokesperson.

The Shin Bet leadership shuffle and coalition friction highlight deepening instability within Netanyahu's administration as of April 1, 2025. The backtrack on Sharvit's nomination reflects sensitivity to internal dissent, while Smotrich's maneuver underscores strategic jockeying among coalition partners.

RBI Announces ₹80,000 Crore OMO to Boost Banking Liquidity

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) unveiled plans for an open market operation (OMO) to inject ₹80,000 crore into the banking system, a strategic move just days before the April monetary policy committee (MPC) review. Bankers say the infusion aims to enhance the transmission of policy rate cuts, ensuring they effectively influence lending rates and stimulate economic activity. The announcement follows a notable shift in banking liquidity, which turned surplus on Saturday and Sunday—the first time in over four months—after persistent deficits. Measured via the RBI's liquidity adjustment facility, this surplus provides a cushion for smoother policy rate transmission during an easing cycle.

By pumping in ₹80,000 crore, the RBI seeks to sustain this momentum, addressing liquidity tightness that had previously hampered rate cut impacts. The timing is critical, with the MPC meeting looming. Analysts view the OMO as a preemptive strike to bolster system liquidity, supporting banks in passing on prior and potential future rate reductions to borrowers. Surplus liquidity typically lowers short-term interest rates, aligning them with the RBI's repo rate, a key policy tool. This move signals the central bank's intent to maintain accommodative conditions amid evolving economic pressures. Bankers note that the RBI's action reflects a proactive stance after months of managing liquidity shortfalls, which had con-

strained monetary policy effectiveness. The surplus over the weekend, though modest, hints at easing strains, possibly from government spending or reduced cash demand. The ₹80,000 crore injection aims to lock in this shift, ensuring banks have ample funds to lend and support growth. As of April 1, 2025, the OMO underscores the RBI's balancing act—fostering growth while guarding against inflation. With the MPC review on the horizon, this liquidity boost could set the stage for further easing, depending on economic data. For now, it's a clear bid to grease the wheels of monetary transmission, reinforcing the RBI's commitment to a responsive and fluid banking system.



GST Collections Surge 9.9% to Over ₹1.96 Lakh Crore in March 2025

India's gross GST collections for March 2025 climbed 9.9% to exceed ₹1.96 lakh crore, according to government data released on April 1, 2025. The robust growth reflects a steady rise in economic activity, with revenue from domestic transactions increasing by 8.8% to ₹1.49 lakh crore. Imports also contributed significantly, with GST from imported goods jumping 13.56% to ₹46,919 crore, signaling strong cross-border trade.

However, the month saw a sharp 41% spike in total refunds, amounting to ₹19,615 crore, a notable increase from the previous year. After accounting for these refunds, the net GST revenue for March stood at over ₹1.76 lakh crore, marking a 7.3% rise compared to the same period in 2024. This net figure, while lower than the gross collection, still underscores a positive trend in tax compliance and economic momentum.

The uptick in domestic revenue highlights resilient consumer spending and business activity, while the higher growth in import-related GST points to India's deepening global trade ties. The refund surge, though, suggests increased claims or administrative adjustments, potentially tied to exporters or input tax credits, which tempered the net revenue gain.

March's performance caps a fiscal year where GST has remained a critical revenue stream for the government, balancing economic recovery with fiscal needs. The 9.9% gross growth outpaces the 7.3% net increase, reflecting the impact of refunds on the final tally. Analysts may view the import revenue



spike as a sign of robust demand for foreign goods, while domestic gains indicate steady internal market strength

As of April 1, 2025, these figures offer a snapshot of India's tax landscape, with GST continuing to evolve as a barometer of economic health. The government will likely leverage this growth to fund infrastructure and welfare, though the refund jump could prompt scrutiny of compliance mechanisms. Overall, March 2025's GST haul reinforces optimism about India's fiscal trajectory, even as it navigates refund-related challenges.

UPI value hits record Rs 24.77 trillion in March, marks new high in FY25

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions soared to unprecedented levels in March 2025, reaching ₹24.77 trillion in value and 19.78 billion in volume, according to National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) data released on April 1, 2025. This reflects a 13% jump in value and a 14% surge in volume from February, fueled by a year-end transaction boom. It's the first time since UPI's launch in April 2016 that value has breached ₹24 trillion and volume has topped 19 billion. For FY25, UPI recorded a 30% increase in value to ₹260.56 trillion from ₹199.96 trillion in FY24, while volume grew 42% to 131.14 billion transactions from 92.48 billion. March's performance stands out after February's dip, when volume fell 5% to 16.11 billion from January's 16.99 billion, and value dropped 6.5% to ₹21.48 trillion from ₹23.48 trillion. Compared to March 2024, this year's figures show a 36% rise in volume and a 25% uptick in value, with daily transactions

climbing to 590 million from February's 575 million. The surge underscores UPI's dominance in India's digital payment ecosystem, driven by its convenience and widespread adoption. March's spike likely ties to seasonal financial closings, boosting both person-to-person and merchant transactions. The FY25 growth highlights UPI's role in India's cashless economy push, with volumes nearly doubling every two years. Meanwhile, Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) also saw gains in March, with volume rising 14% to 462 million

from February's 405 million, and value increasing 19% to ₹6.68 trillion from ₹5.63 trillion. January recorded 444 million transactions worth ₹6.06 trillion. IMPS's uptick complements UPI's dominance, catering to users favoring bank-to-bank transfers. As of April 1, 2025, these milestones reflect India's accelerating shift to digital finance, with UPI setting new benchmarks monthly. The robust March figures signal sustained momentum, positioning UPI as a global model for real-time payments while IMPS holds steady as a reliable alternative.



Capital expenditure not cut, rises to Rs 11.21 trn for FY26: Sitharaman

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman clarified on April 1, 2025, that the Centre has not reduced capital expenditure, countering speculation during a Rajya Sabha Question Hour session. She announced that the capital outlay for the 2025-26 fiscal year has increased to ₹11.21 lakh crore, up from ₹11.11 lakh crore in 2024-25. "The capital expenditure has not been cut at all; it has gone up to ₹11.21 lakh crore," Sitharaman emphasized, dispelling concerns of a rollback in infrastructure spending.



Addressing lawmakers, she highlighted a proportional rise in interest-free, 50-year loans provided to states under a special assistance scheme for capital expenditure. This increase aligns with the enhanced central allocation, ensuring states have greater resources for development projects. "Cutting down capital expenditure is not the case with us," she asserted, reinforcing the government's commitment to boosting economic growth through sustained investment.

The modest hike from ₹11.11 lakh crore to ₹11.21 lakh crore reflects a strategic focus on infrastructure, a key driver of

India's post-pandemic recovery. Sitharaman's statement comes amid scrutiny over fiscal priorities, with opposition members questioning whether welfare spending might overshadow capital outlays. Her response underscores a balanced approach, maintaining capex momentum while supporting states with long-term financing.

The special assistance scheme, offering 50-year interest-free loans, has been a cornerstone of Centre-state collaboration, enabling states to fund roads, bridges, and other assets without immediate fiscal strain. The proportional increase in these loans for 2025-26 signals continued trust in this model to spur regional development alongside national projects.

As of April 1, 2025, Sitharaman's remarks in the Rajya Sabha affirm the government's growth-oriented fiscal stance. The ₹10,000 crore uptick, though incremental, sustains the capex push initiated in recent budgets, aiming to crowd in private investment and bolster economic resilience. With states also empowered through enhanced loans, the Centre aims to maintain a robust infrastructure pipeline, countering any narrative of austerity in a year poised for economic consolidation.

Sensex and Nifty Plunge on First Day of FY 2025-26 Amid US Tariff Uncertainty

India's domestic stock market faced intense selling pressure on April 1, 2025, the opening day of the 2025-26 financial year, as the BSE Sensex plummeted 1.8% and the Nifty 50 dropped 1.5%. The sharp decline was fueled by global uncertainty surrounding US President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariff announcement slated for April 2, casting a shadow over investor sentiment. The Sensex, comprising 30 blue-chip

stocks, shed 1,390.41 points to close at 76,024.51, while the broader Nifty 50 lost 353.65 points, settling at 23,165.7. The sell-off erased gains from recent sessions, reflecting jittery markets bracing for potential disruptions in global trade dynamics. Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Investments Limited, attributed the downturn to "heightened global volatility" ahead of Trump's tariff reveal. "The domestic market wit-

nessed a significant sell-off today as investors await specifics of these tariffs while monitoring negotiations for a potential Indo-US trade agreement," Nair noted. Trump's proposed tariffs, billed as a counter to nations like India with high duties on US goods, have sparked fears of retaliatory trade barriers, unsettling equity markets worldwide. The timing amplifies anxiety, with India's market already navigating domestic economic cues at FY26's start. Investors are torn between the tariff threat and hopes of an Indo-US deal to mitigate fallout. The uncertainty prompted broad-based selling, with sectors sensitive to trade—such as IT, auto, and manufacturing—bearing the brunt. As of April 1, 2025, the crash underscores the market's vulnerability to external shocks, particularly from US policy shifts. Trump's April 2 announcement, dubbed a "game-changer" by the White House, could reshape export-import equations, especially if India's 100% agricultural tariffs face reprisals. With no clarity yet on the tariff scope, the Sensex and Nifty's steep fall reflects a flight to safety, setting a cautious tone for the fiscal year. Investors now await tomorrow's details, hoping for clarity to steady nerves in an increasingly volatile global landscape.



Copenhagen's Alchemist: Fine Dining or Shock Art?"

Alchemist, an avant-garde restaurant in Copenhagen, has gained global attention for its extravagant 50-course menu curated by chef Rasmus Munk. The dining experience lasts around five hours and costs approximately Rs 60,000 (\$700), offering guests an unusual mix of flavors and thought-provoking presentations. The menu features dishes such as edible butterflies, raw jellyfish, lamb brain mousse served in a bowl resembling a cut-open human head, and even smashed chicken heads. Guests are encouraged to approach the meal with an open mind, as Alchemist warns that its unconventional offerings may

not be suitable for first dates or business meetings. Beyond its experimental cuisine, Alchemist integrates social and environmental commentary into its dishes. Some items aim to highlight critical global issues—such as chicken feet served in a cage to draw attention to factory farming, fish wrapped in edible plastic to symbolize ocean pollution, and a dessert made from frozen pig and lamb's blood to provoke discussions on food ethics. While the restaurant's mission is to use food as a platform for awareness, it has also sparked controversy. Many social media users have pointed out the irony of promoting ani-

mal welfare while serving dishes featuring live creatures. Some have questioned whether the experience is about fine dining or simply shock value. Despite the criticism, Alchemist continues to push culinary boundaries, merging gastronomy with storytelling and social activism. For some, it is an extraordinary culinary journey; for others, it raises ethical concerns about where to draw the line between food and performance art. Whether seen as a groundbreaking concept or an over-the-top spectacle, Alchemist remains one of the most talked-about dining experiences in the world.



Sam Altman Praises viral Ghibli Craze:

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman is delighted by the viral trend of people using ChatGPT to create Studio Ghibli-style images. He expressed happiness over social media, particularly X, being filled with positivity. A user, Sohail Ahmed, tweeted, "After a long time, I see positivity on X because of people sharing cute images of their family and loved ones. Thanks, Sam." Altman responded, "This is generally a quite negative platform, so I am happy we were able to bring some joy temporarily." The trend began after OpenAI's

latest update, GPT-4o, was released last week. This version significantly improves text rendering and follows detailed prompts, including the ability to generate stunning Ghibli-inspired images. The AI-generated artworks flooded platforms like X and Instagram, delighting users worldwide. However, not everyone was impressed. Tesla CEO Elon Musk took a jab at OpenAI, suggesting the company was wasting resources on trivial features instead of focusing on more important AI advancements. This adds to

the ongoing rivalry between Musk and Altman. Earlier this year, Musk and a group of investors attempted to purchase OpenAI. Musk claimed the bid aimed to prevent OpenAI from becoming a for-profit entity. However, Altman rejected the offer, stating that OpenAI was "not for sale." He also accused Musk, who owns AI startup xAI, of trying to hinder OpenAI's progress. Despite the criticism, the Ghibli AI art trend continues to spread, bringing a rare wave of positivity to social media.

Pune Techie's Rise to ₹2.3 Crore

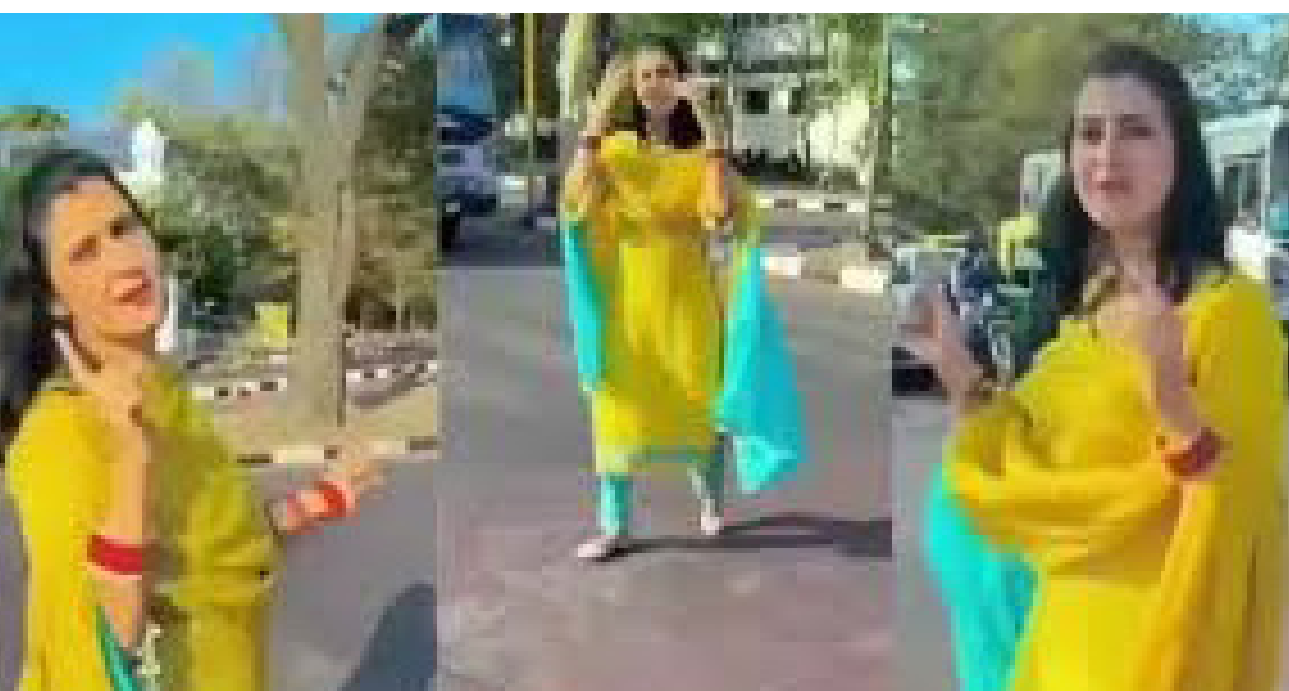
A Pune-based tech professional has shared his inspiring journey of growing his salary from ₹4.7 LPA to an astonishing ₹2.3 crore per year in just eight years. Despite graduating from a tier-3 college with a non-computer science degree, his passion for web development led him to freelance on over 100 projects using HTML, CSS, JavaS-

cript, PHP, and Node.js. This hands-on experience helped him land his first job at ₹4.7 LPA. Realizing the importance of data structures and algorithms (DSA), he invested time in mastering them, which, combined with strategic job switches, propelled him towards FAANG companies. Moving from a service-based startup to a product-based one tripled

his salary, preparing him for the next leap. After two and a half years of rigorous DSA practice, he secured a FAANG job, doubling his pay to ₹26 LPA. As he gained expertise in large-scale infrastructure and distributed systems, he moved up to an SDE II position. A well-timed switch to another FAANG company increased his salary to ₹45 LPA. His growth didn't stop there—continuous learning and persistence earned him a role equivalent to SDE III, bringing his package to ₹1.3 crore annually. Eventually, after four years in FAANG, he transitioned to a Staff Engineer role at a prestigious global company, hitting ₹2 crore per year. His story sparked debates online, with some praising his skills and strategic moves while others argued about the role of luck. While some found his rapid financial growth motivating, others questioned whether such opportunities exist outside major tech hubs like Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Regardless of opinions, his journey highlights how upskilling, persistence, and calculated career moves can lead to extraordinary financial success.



Chandigarh Cop Suspended Over Wife's Dance



A Chandigarh police constable, Ajay Kundu, was suspended after a viral video of his wife, Jyoti Kundu, dancing on a zebra crossing caused a major traffic jam. The Instagram reel, filmed by Jyoti's sister-in-law, Pooja, was posted on March 22 and quickly gained traction online. The video showed Jyoti dancing to a popular Haryanvi song in the middle of a busy road, disrupting traffic flow and endangering both pedestrians and motorists. As the video spread, it caught the attention of local authorities, who launched an investigation. Reports indicate that vehicles were brought to a complete standstill as Jyoti and Pooja focused on filming, paying no heed to the chaos unfolding around them. An informant alerted the police after watching the viral clip, claiming that the women's actions posed a significant safety hazard. The police, led by ASI Baljit Singh, reviewed

CCTV footage from key locations, including Gurdwara Chowk and the Police Control Room. The footage confirmed the claims, showing Jyoti in a yellow suit dancing in the middle of the road while Pooja recorded her performance. Following the investigation, an FIR was registered under Sections 125, 292, and 3(5) of BNS for obstructing traffic and endangering public safety. The incident has sparked discussions online, with some criticizing the women for their reckless behavior, while others argue that the punishment was too harsh. Many social media users pointed out that such stunts for viral fame should not come at the cost of public safety. As for Ajay Kundu, his suspension has raised questions about accountability, with authorities reinforcing the need for responsible social media behavior, especially when it disrupts public order.

April Fool's Day: Origins & Pranks

April Fool's Day, celebrated every year on April 1, is a day of jokes, pranks, and playful deception. But where did this tradition originate? While its exact beginnings remain uncertain, many historians trace it back to 1582 when France adopted the Gregorian calendar, replacing the Julian calendar. This shift, ordered by Pope Gregory XIII and the Council of Trent, moved the New Year to January 1. However, not everyone was aware of the change, and those who continued celebrating the New Year in late March or on April 1 were mocked as "fools." Over time, this ridicule turned into an annual tradition of playing harmless pranks, leading to the establishment of "All Fools' Day." Some theories also suggest that April Fool's Day may have roots in ancient festivals celebrating the arrival of spring, a time of joy, renewal, and playful mischief.



Throughout history, many famous hoaxes have been pulled off on April 1. One of the most legendary occurred in 1957 when the BBC aired a report about Swiss farmers harvesting spaghetti from trees. Viewers believed it, unaware that pasta doesn't grow on trees! Another notable prank was Google's infamous joke launches, such as announcing "Google Nose," a service claiming to

let users search by smell. Across cultures, the spirit of April Fool's Day remains the same: spreading laughter through harmless tricks. Whether it's elaborate media hoaxes or simple practical jokes among friends, the day continues to bring joy worldwide. Egypt's rich and complex past, offering new insights into burial practices and political dynamics during the New Kingdom period.

Punjab Kings Secure Dominant 8-Wicket Win Over LSG



Punjab Kings (PBKS) defeated Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) by eight wickets+ in an IPL match on Tuesday. Chasing a target of 172, PBKS reached 177/2 in 16.2 overs, powered by Prahsimran Singh's explosive 69 off 34 balls and captain Shreyas Iyer's unbeaten 52 off 30 balls. Nehal Wadhwa also contributed with 43 not out off 25 balls. Earlier, LSG posted 171/7 in 20 overs, with Nicholas Pooran top-scoring with 44 off 30 balls. Ayush Badoni (41), Aiden Markram (28), and Abdul Sa-

mad (27) also made key contributions. Arshdeep Singh (3/43) was PBKS' standout bowler. PBKS comfortably chased down the target, with Digvesh Rathi (2/30) picking both wickets for LSG. The win strengthens PBKS' position in the tournament.

Vandana Katariya Retires from International Hockey After 15-Year Career



Indian women's hockey legend Vandana Katariya announced her retirement from international hockey, ending a stellar 15-year career. The 32-year-old forward, India's most-capped female player, played 320 matches and scored 158 goals. A key figure in India's historic fourth-place finish at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, Katariya was the first Indian woman to score an Olympic hat-trick. She also won multiple medals, including gold at the

2016 and 2023 Asian Champions Trophy. "This isn't a goodbye from hockey," she said, confirming she will continue playing in the Hockey India League. Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey hailed her as "the heartbeat of India's attack." Honored with the Padma Shri and Arjuna Award, Katariya leaves behind an inspiring legacy for future generations of Indian hockey.

Wasim Jaffer Expresses Concern Over India's Test Team Ahead of England Tour



land. He highlighted concerns over the form of senior batters like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, as well as the potential absence of key pacers like Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammad Shami. Jaffer also stressed that India's batters will face challenges with the Dukes ball in England. He urged the team to improve and secure their first series win in England since 2007. The five-Test series begins on June 20 in Leeds, marking the start of the ICC World Test Championship 2025-27 cycle.

Wasim Jaffer, former Indian cricketer, expressed concerns over the current form of the Indian Test team ahead of their England tour. Speaking to Bo-

ria Majumdar on Revsportz, Jaffer admitted he was "a little worried" following India's poor performance in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy and their loss to New Zea-

Indian Arrows Women Juniors Set for IWL 2 Challenge



Indian Arrows Women Juniors, with an average age of just 15, are geared up for the 2024-25 Indian Women's League 2 under Swedish head coach Joakim Alexandersson. The team, preparing for the SAFF U17 Women's Championship (September 2025) and AFC U17 Women's Asian Cup 2026

Qualifiers, will gain valuable exposure playing against senior teams. Their campaign begins on April 2 against Pudhuvai Unicorns in Bengaluru. Placed in Group B, they will also face Inter Kashi (April 4), Roots FC (April 7), and Casa Barwani SC (April 9). The top two teams will advance to

the final round in Goa. AIFF officials hailed this initiative as crucial for player development. "It strengthens their tactical understanding and resilience," said AIFF Secretary General Anilkumar P. All matches will be streamed live on the Indian Football YouTube Channel.

Yuva Mumbai, Sonipat Spartans Set for Crucial Eliminator Showdowns



The Yuva All-Stars Championship playoffs are set to feature two thrilling eliminator matches on April 2. Yuva Mumbai, after a 48-26 victory over Junior Steelers, will face Yuva Yoddhas in Eliminator 1 at 4:00 pm. Yuva Yoddhas, having secured their spot after the head-to-head round, will look to advance to the semi-finals.

In the second eliminator, Sonipat Spartans, who triumphed over Palani Tuskers 44-33, will face Warriorz KC, who won 51-34 against Chandigarh Chargers, at 5:30 pm. Both teams aim to earn a spot in the semi-finals. The winners of these matches will meet in the semi-final on Thursday, leading up to the grand finale on Friday.

Thangaraja, Talwar Share Lead at Adani Invitational Golf Championship 2025



Sri Lanka's N Thangaraja and local golfer Saptak Talwar shot five-under 67 to share the lead in round one of the Rs 1.5 crore Adani Invitational Golf Championship 2025 at Jaypee Greens, Greater Noida. Thangaraja, a recent PGTI winner, played a bogey-free round, sinking five birdies with impressive approach shots. "My hitting form has been great, and I'll take an error-free round any day,"

he said. Talwar, adjusting to his home course, recovered from a slow start with an eagle and four birdies in six holes. Om Prakash Chouhan, Arjun Prasad, Sunhit Bishnoi, and Md Somrat Sikdar followed closely at four-under 68. Yuvraj Sandhu and Shaurya Bhattacharya were tied 10th at 70. The tournament continues with high competition expected in the coming rounds.



Ram Charan's upcoming movie Peddi, directed by Buchi Babu Sana, has already created a buzz with its high expectations. Recently, the audio rights for the film were sold for an eye-popping ₹35 crore, a deal secured by T-Series. The film's music is composed by Oscar-winning music director A.R. Rahman, making this collaboration between Rahman and Charan

particularly special. Peddi has garnered attention due to its stellar combination of Charan and Rahman, marking their first project together. The movie's first look and title were unveiled on March 27, coinciding with Charan's birthday, and the team has announced that they will release a glimpse of the film on April 6, during the auspicious occasion of Sri Rama Navami.

The film also stars Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor as the lead heroine, alongside prominent actors like Shivraj Kumar, Divyendu, and Jagapathi Babu in crucial roles. The movie is being jointly produced by Maitri Movie Makers, Viridi Cinemas, and Sukumar Writings. Fans are eagerly awaiting the release of Peddi, and the film is expected to be a major hit.

Sobhita Bags a Big Offer in Director



Tollywood actress Sobhita Dhulipala, who has primarily worked in Bollywood, is now set to make a strong comeback in Telugu cinema. After taking a short break following her marriage to Naga Chaitanya in December last year, she is gearing up to take on new projects. According to reports, Sobhita has been offered a major role in a film directed by sensational filmmaker Pa. Ranjith. Known for his unique storytelling and strong character-driven narratives, Ranjith's films always stand out. His latest project, Vettuvam, features actors like Dinesh, Arya, Ashok Selvan, and Fahadh Faasil in key roles. If Sobhita officially joins the film, it could be a game-changer for her career, as Ranjith is known for casting actors who perfectly fit his characters. This opportunity could help her showcase her talent and achieve the stardom she has been waiting for. An official announcement is awaited.

Mega157: Cast, Crew, and Special Video

The shooting of Megastar Chiranjeevi's much-anticipated film, Mega157, has officially begun. Directed by Anil Ravipudi, the movie is currently in production, with Mega157 serving as its working title. To build excitement, the makers recently released a special video, offering fans a behind-the-scenes look at the film's key crew members. The video captures Megastar Chiranjeevi interacting with the essential team members, introducing their roles while referencing characters from his previous films. This unique approach has resonated with fans, making the video go viral on YouTube. The filmmakers have set an ambitious timeline, aiming for a grand release during Sankranti 2026. With



Chiranjeevi declaring, "Let's make this Sankranti unforgettable," the production team is working at full speed to meet the deadline. The

buzz surrounding Mega157 continues to grow, with fans eagerly awaiting more updates from the film's unit.

L2Empuraan Creates Box Office History



Mohanlal's L2Empuraan has made waves at the box office, breaking records and earning massive collections despite

controversies surrounding its release. Directed by Prithviraj Sukumaran, the Malayalam film has crossed the ₹200 crore mark

in just four days, becoming the first Malayalam film to achieve this feat. Released on March 27, the movie has been raking in impressive numbers since its opening day, much to the delight of the production team. Despite facing criticism over the portrayal of certain communities, the film's box office performance continues to soar. L2Empuraan has surpassed the previous ₹200 crore record held by Manjumaal Boys, setting a new benchmark for Malayalam cinema. The film's team remains optimistic about further growth in its collections, with expectations high for continued success. The film's unprecedented achievements in such a short span have made it a significant milestone in the industry.

Vijay's 'Jana Nayagan' OTT Rights Sold for ₹121 Crore

Upcoming movie Jana Nayagan, which also stars Pooja Hegde and Mamitha Baiju in key roles, is generating significant excitement. This film is planned as Vijay's final project, with the shoot currently progressing at a rapid pace. The team, led by director H. Vinoth, is working tirelessly to complete the movie, especially considering Vijay's involvement in politics. In major news, Jana Nayagan has reportedly secured a massive deal for its OTT rights. Amazon Prime Video has acquired the pan-India streaming

rights for the film for a whopping ₹121 crore, making it one of the biggest OTT deals in Vijay's career, second only to his Leo film. The movie is set to feature music by Anirudh, while the production is handled

by KVN Productions. Fans can expect a grand release of Jana Nayagan on January 9 next year. This marks another milestone for Vijay, further fueling anticipation for the film's release.



Salman's 'Sikandar' Makes Moderate Earnings Despite Eid Release

Bollywood's action star Salman Khan's much-anticipated film Sikandar, directed by AR Murugadoss and starring Rashmika Mandanna and Kajal Aggarwal, hit the screens as an Eid release. However, despite the festival release, the movie received unexpected negative reviews, and it struggled to gain significant attention in Bollywood on its opening day. The film managed to earn over ₹30 crores in net collections across India on its

opening day. However, the earnings on Day 2 were comparatively modest, with reports indicating ₹33.36 crores in collections. While the Eid holiday provided a slight boost to the film's box office performance, the overall jump in earnings was not as high as anticipated. The real test will be in the coming weekdays when the movie faces a more regular competition. It remains to be seen how Sikandar performs in the long run during the working days.

