

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

t°

H 33° C

L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

t°

H 35° C

L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

t°

H 36° C

L 26° C



CM Siddaramaiah to Discuss Creation of Two More DCM Posts with Rahul Gandhi

Siddaramaiah seeks Rahul Gandhi's approval for two more DCM posts

Proposal aims to balance representation for Veerashaiva-Lingayat and SC communities

Meeting scheduled for April 3 in New Delhi

al comes amid dissatisfaction among Siddaramaiah's supporters over DCM D K Shivakumar's dual role as KPCC president and his control of crucial portfolios like water resources and Bengaluru development. With Congress President Mallikarjuna Kharge reportedly backing Shivakumar's continuation as KPCC president, Siddaramaiah's strategy appears aimed at expanding leadership roles to strengthen the party's prospects in upcoming local body elections. Sources suggest that Siddaramaiah will also highlight the controversy surrounding Shivakumar's alleged statement about granting the 2B quota for Muslims, which has caused embarrassment to the party leadership. The CM may seek to capitalize on this issue to bolster his position. Additionally, it remains uncertain whether Siddaramaiah will raise the issue of the alleged honey-trap attempt on his cabinet colleague K N Rajanna and the reported 'supari' killing plot against Rajanna's MLC son, Rajendra, during his discussion with Rahul Gandhi.

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
Karnataka State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is set to meet Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on April 3 at the new AICC office in New Delhi, where he is likely to propose the creation of two additional Deputy Chief Minister (DCM) posts. The meeting has been facilitated by AICC General Secretary K C Venugopal, a key ally of Siddaramaiah. According to party insiders, Siddaramaiah intends to advocate for his con-

tinuation as CM beyond his two-and-a-half-year tenure while proposing the DCM posts to address community representation ahead of local body elections. The new DCM positions are intended for members from the Veerashaiva-Lingayat and Scheduled Caste (SC) communities. Siddaramaiah is expected to present his case during a half-hour, one-on-one discussion with Rahul Gandhi, emphasizing the electoral benefits of broader representation. The propos-

Ranya Rao seeks bail after third plea rejection

Karnataka High Court to hear the matter next week

DGP officer's stepdaughter faces serious charges

Kannada Actress Ranya Rao Moves Karnataka HC for Bail Over Gold Smuggling Case

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
Kannada actress Ranya Rao, who is accused in a gold smuggling case, has approached the Karnataka High Court for bail after her third bail plea was rejected by a sessions court. The High Court is expected to hear her petition next week. Ranya Rao's third bail plea was denied by the court on March 27, citing the serious nature of the charges against her. Earlier, her request for bail was rejected by a Special Court for Economic Offences on March 14, and a Magistrate Court had also denied her release. Ranya Rao, who is the stepdaughter of DGP rank officer K Ramachandra Rao, was arrested on March 3 at Bengaluru International Airport for allegedly attempting to smuggle 14.8 kg of gold, worth over Rs 12 crore, from Dubai. Subsequent investigations by the Di-

rectorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) revealed that Rao had previously smuggled 14.56 kg of gold, leading to a customs duty loss of Rs 4.45 crore. Sahil Sakariya Jain, the third accused in the case, was reportedly involved in assisting Ranya in selling the smuggled gold in India and facilitating hawala transactions. Jain is a key figure in the smuggling syndicate and was arrested after the gold was seized. In response to the developments, the Karnataka government has appointed Additional Chief Secretary Gaurav Gupta to investigate whether Ramachandra Rao had any role in his stepdaughter's alleged smuggling activities. Currently, Ramachandra Rao serves as the Managing Director of the Karnataka State Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation.



India-China Ties Should Resemble 'Elephant-Dragon Tango': Xi Jinping

Xi Jinping calls for harmonious coexistence between India and China.

Leaders exchanged messages on the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties.

Emphasis on deepening communication and safeguarding border peace.

TPN Correspondent | Ind-China
Chinese President Xi Jinping has expressed the desire for closer ties between India and China, suggesting their relationship should resemble a "Dragon-Elephant tango," symbolizing harmonious cooperation between the two nations. The statement was made during the exchange of congratulatory messages between President Xi Jinping and Indian President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday, marking the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Chinese leader emphasized the need for peaceful coexistence and expressed his readiness to enhance communication and coordination on major international matters. He also stressed the importance of jointly safeguarding peace in the border areas, particularly in light of the tensions following the 2020 clash between Indian and Chinese troops along their shared Himalayan border. The exchange of messages is seen as a positive gesture towards stabilizing relations between the two neighboring giants and promoting regional peace and cooperation.

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

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 Rijiju.



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

'Yesu Yesu Prophet' Bajinder Singh Sentenced To Life In 2018 Rape Case



TPN Correspondent | Punjab
Self-styled preacher Pastor Bajinder Singh, known as the "Yesu Yesu prophet," has been sentenced to life imprisonment by a court in Mohali, Punjab, in connection with a 2018 rape case. The 42-year-old preacher, popular for his healing congregations, was convicted under Sections 376 (rape), 323 (voluntary causing hurt), and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code. He is currently lodged in Patiala jail. The case was registered at Zirakpur police station in 2018 following a complaint by a woman who alleged that

Singh lured her with promises of taking her abroad, raped her at his residence in Sector 63, Mohali, and filmed the act. According to her complaint, Singh threatened to release the video on social media if she did not comply with his demands. Five co-accused in the case—Akhbar Bhatti, Rajesh Chaudhary, Jatinder Kumar, Sitar Ali, and Sandeep Pehlwan—were acquitted by the court. Controversy continues to surround Singh as Mohali Police recently booked him for assault

‘No question of Yatnal joining us, his ideology does not suit Congress’: Satish Jarkiholi

- Satish Jarkiholi dismisses reports of Yatnal joining Congress
- Jarkiholi emphasizes ideological differences between Yatnal and Congress
- Jarkiholi clarifies his meetings with political leaders

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Public Works Department and District In-charge Minister Satish Jarkiholi has categorically dismissed reports about Basangouda Patil Yatnal, the expelled BJP MLA, joining Congress. Speaking to the media in Belagavi on Tuesday, Jarkiholi stated, “The question of Yatnal joining Congress does not arise at all. His ideology does not match with that of Congress, and the BJP’s ideology aligns more with his.” He added that Yatnal might return to



the BJP within a year or less, as he has previously quit and rejoined the saffron party. Jarkiholi further clarified that although Yatnal may have met with some Congress leaders after his expulsion, it does not indicate any plans of joining the party. The Congress minister pointed out that the party’s ideology was not a fit for Yatnal, who

had a history of leaving the BJP only to return later. In addition, Jarkiholi spoke about his recent trip to New Delhi, where he met Union Surface Transport Minister and Food and Civil Supplies Minister Pralhad Joshi. Despite speculation, he confirmed that he did not discuss politics during his meeting with Union

Industries Minister H D Kumaraswamy or former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda. The primary focus of the meeting with Kumaraswamy was to seek support for industrial development in Belagavi, aiming to generate employment for the local youth. Regarding a meeting with AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, Jarkiholi explained that it was not about changing the KPCC president. He stated that it was a matter for the party high command to decide. Lastly, Jarkiholi responded to BJP’s protests over rising milk prices and tax hikes, emphasizing that these decisions were based on proposals from the Karnataka Milk Federation and previous government practices. He criticized the BJP’s protests as unnecessary.

BJP to Launch ‘Janakrosha Yatra’ in Dakshina Kannada on April 9

- Four-phase ‘Janakrosha Yatra’ to protest against Congress government’s policies
- Padayatra to cover two to three kilometers; route and leaders to be finalized soon
- BJP condemns suspension of 18 MLAs as biased and politically motivated



TPN Correspondent | Dakshina Kannada

The BJP will hold a ‘Janakrosha Yatra’ in Dakshina Kannada on April 9 to protest against the price hikes and reservation policies favoring Muslims in government contracts. Dakshina Kannada BJP President Sathish Kumpala announced the plan during a press conference in Mangaluru, criticizing the Congress-led government’s decisions. According to Kumpala, the ‘Janakrosha Yatra’ will be conducted in four phases to raise awareness about what the BJP considers anti-people policies. The protest aims to highlight the government’s alleged financial exploitation of the poor through rising prices of essential commodities and skewed reservation policies. The yatra will be organized as a padayatra,

covering a distance of two to three kilometers. Specific locations and the names of senior party leaders participating in the yatra will be finalized soon. Kumpala pointed out that since the Congress government assumed power, prices of essential items have escalated, including milk prices, electricity tariffs, petrol, diesel, stamp duty, and various service charges. He alleged that these measures are directly burdening ordinary citizens while the government engages in “appeasement politics” and corruption. The BJP leader also condemned the suspension of 18 BJP MLAs by Assembly Speaker U T Khader, accusing him of acting as a “Speaker of the Congress.” Kumpala demanded a fair inquiry and evidence to justify the suspension of two MLAs from the district, Dr. Y Bharath Shetty and Umanath Kotian. Kumpala criticized Khader for focusing on politics instead of addressing pressing local issues such as sea erosion and drinking water scarcity in Mangaluru. The BJP intends to protest against the suspension and what it perceives as unjust governance by the state government.

Karnataka Police Busts Gang of Robbers, Seizes Over 17 kg Stolen Gold

Six-member gang arrested, 17.7 kg of stolen gold recovered

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
Karnataka police successfully apprehended a six-member gang of robbers and recovered 17.7 kg of stolen gold, officials announced on Monday. The gold was stolen from the Nyamati branch of the State Bank of India in Davangere on October 28, 2024. The arrested individuals have been identified as Vijaykumar (30), his brother Ajaykumar (28), Abhisheka (23), Chandru (23), Manjunath (32), and Paramananda (30). The stolen locker containing gold ornaments was recovered from a well in Usalampatti town of Madurai district, Tamil Nadu. Vijaykumar and Ajaykumar, both originally from Tamil Nadu, have been running a sweets business in Nyamati for several years. Paramananda is their brother-in-law, while the other accused are locals of Nyamati.



During the investigation, police discovered the involvement of another notorious gang from Kakrala in Budaun district, Uttar Pradesh, which has been responsible for numerous bank heists across South India over the past decade. This includes the 15 kg gold heist from Karnataka Grameen Bank, Hosahalli Branch, in November 2022, and a 4 kg gold theft from the Bevuru Branch.

The Kakrala gang’s modus operandi involves targeting banks surrounded by large fields, breaking in through windows, using gas cutters, removing DVRs, and avoiding mobile phone usage to evade detection. Five members of the Kakrala gang, identified as Guddu Kalia, Aslam, Hazarath Ali, Kamruddin, and Babu Sahan, were apprehended earlier this month. The arrests have provided fresh leads on various other property offences committed in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Police operations to apprehend the culprits extended to Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh, covering challenging terrains over several months. Further investigation is ongoing to unravel additional links and recover more stolen property.

Karnataka’s Mysuru Witnesses Sharp Decline in Foreign Tourists

TPN Correspondent | Mysuru

Mysuru, a city known for its heritage sites and cultural significance, has experienced a concerning decline in the number of international tourists. Despite the revival of tourism post-Covid-19, the city has seen a sharp drop in foreign visitors, raising alarms among industry stakeholders. Typically, Mysuru receives between 3 lakh to 3.25 lakh foreign tourists every financial year. However, last year, the number fell drastically, failing to even reach 2 lakh. A review of visitor statistics from the Mysuru Palace also highlights this trend. In 2016-17, the palace attracted 64,614 foreign tourists, but this figure dropped to 34,604 in 2023-24. As of December 2024, only 24,034 foreign visitors had toured the palace. Tourism experts believe the decline can be attributed to several factors, including inadequate infrastructure, lack of effective promotional efforts, and the absence of structured tourist circuits aimed at international visitors. A tourist guide at Mysuru



Palace noted that the hike in ticket prices, coupled with the lack of big events apart from the annual Dasara festival, has further discouraged foreign tourists from visiting. The pandemic had already severely impacted the tourism sector in 2020, with few international tourists making their way to Mysuru due to travel restrictions and lockdowns. Now, a combination of limited promotional activities and poorly developed tourist circuits has compounded the issue, leaving many concerned about the future of international tourism in the city.

1st Page Cont..

Waqf Amendment Bill To Be Tabled In Lok Sabha On Wednesday

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.

‘Yeshe Yeshe Prophet’ Bajinder Singh Sentenced To Life In 2018 Rape Case

after CCTV footage showed him allegedly arguing and slapping a woman on February 14. The footage, which went viral on social media, prompted authorities to initiate fresh investigations. Additionally, a 22-year-old woman filed a sexual harassment complaint against Singh on February 28, alleging that he sent her inappropriate messages and made unwelcome advances. A three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT), led by Superintendent of Police Rupinder Kaur,

is handling the investigation. Singh, who began preaching in 2012, leads The Church of Glory and Wisdom at Tajpur in Jalandhar and Majri in Mohali. His YouTube channel, “Prophet Bajinder Singh,” has amassed over 3.74 million subscribers, with followers frequently attending his healing sessions. The pastor continues to face scrutiny as allegations mount against him, with police investigations actively ongoing.

Shakti Scheme Boosts Women’s Labor Force Participation in Karnataka: Survey

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

A recent survey has highlighted the positive effects of Karnataka’s Shakti scheme, which offers free travel for women on government buses. The survey, conducted by the Fiscal Policy Institute, Just Job Network, and M2M Media Network, found that the scheme has led to an increase in both female labor force participation and worker participation rates in the state. Before the Shakti scheme, female labor force participation was 25.3%, but this rose to 30.2% after the scheme was implemented. Similarly, the worker participation rate increased from 27.6% to 28.8%. The survey, which involved 25,925 respondents across 112 Assembly constituencies, found that 64.43% of respondents viewed the free travel initiative as a positive move, and 55.27% of women shifted from private buses to government buses after the scheme began. The survey also revealed that 57.45% of women were able to save money due to the free travel, which they used for other household expenses. Fur-



thermore, 48.33% of women felt that the scheme had benefited their entire household. Interestingly, a portion of women were found to be traveling unnecessarily after the introduction of the scheme. The report noted a growing approval rate for the scheme among women, which increased from 57% to 64%. Usage of government buses also surged, with daily usage rising from 20% to 27%, while weekly usage slightly de-

creased from 46% to 38%. In conclusion, the survey found that the Shakti scheme has contributed positively to women’s empowerment and economic participation. It has also helped women gain better access to medical care and education, while boosting disposable income. The scheme has generated significant GST revenue and is aiding the self-sufficiency of Karnataka’s bus corporations.



K. Annamalai to Lose BJP State President Post Amid Alliance Talks

TPN Correspondent | Tamil Nadu

Political developments in Tamil Nadu have intensified with rumors about BJP State President K. Annamalai stepping down from his position. This speculation arises amidst efforts to rebuild the alliance between BJP and AIADMK for the 2026 assembly elections.

According to an Indian Express report, AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K. Palaniswami (EPS) recently met with Union Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi. Sources reveal that EPS has demanded Annamalai's removal as a pre-condition for the alliance. The two leaders, Annamalai and EPS, belong to the same community, which is reportedly causing friction in alliance negotiations.

In 2023, the AIADMK-BJP alliance broke down due to ideological differences, with Annamalai's leadership cited as a major factor. However, BJP's

central leadership appears willing to consider AIADMK's demand, aiming to strengthen its base in Tamil Nadu beyond the western regions.

Insiders indicate that Nainar Nagendran, a prominent leader from the Thevar community, is being considered as Annamalai's replacement. Nagendran, formerly with the AIADMK, is influential in the Tirunelveli region and his appointment could help consolidate Thevar community support. Although Annamalai has met Amit Shah and briefed him on Tamil Nadu politics, he remains firm in his commitment to the party. "There is no change in my loyalty. I will always work for the party, whether as president or a regular worker," Annamalai said.

Party leaders suggest that Annamalai's removal is not a setback, but rather a strategic move to solidify BJP's alliance with AIADMK ahead of the crucial 2026 elections.

BJP SriRamulu Aligns with Vijayendra After Yatnal's Expulsion

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Senior BJP leader B. Sriramulu, who recently voiced his dissatisfaction with the party's leadership, has now taken a surprising turn by aligning himself with state president BY Vijayendra. This shift



comes after the expulsion of Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, a vocal critic of the BJP leadership.

Sriramulu met senior leader BS Yediyurappa and state president Vijayendra during Ugadi celebrations, sharing photos of their meeting and describing discussions on party organization and opposition to the Congress government. Just last month, Sriramulu had openly expressed displeasure over Vijayendra's leadership, hinting that he lacked sufficient experience to lead the party. He had even hinted at pursuing the state president's post himself.

However, Yatnal's expulsion appears to have prompted a change in his approach. Party insiders suggest that Sriramulu's silence following the expulsion indicates his strategic realignment to secure his position within the party. This development comes amid reports of multiple leaders expressing

discontent over Vijayendra's leadership, including BP Harish, Kumar Bangarappa, Satish Jarkiholi, and Aravind Limbavali.

Sriramulu's apparent shift has fueled speculation that he is attempting to strengthen ties with Vijayendra to avoid repercussions similar to those faced by Yatnal.

By distancing himself from the controversy and showcasing loyalty to Vijayendra, Sriramulu seems to be prioritizing his political future over previous ambitions for the state president post.

His recent statements praising the party leadership and avoiding any mention of Yatnal's expulsion further solidify his changed stance. Political analysts believe Sriramulu's calculated silence marks a significant turning point in the ongoing power struggle within the BJP in Karnataka.

Minister Priyank Kharge Criticizes BJP's Statewide Campaign Against Congress

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge has slammed the BJP's decision to launch a statewide campaign against the Karnataka Congress government over rising milk and electricity prices. In a social media post, Kharge argued that the BJP should focus its protests on the central government's economic policies, which he claims are the root cause of widespread inflation.

Highlighting the burden on common citizens, Kharge pointed out that the price of a normal vegetarian meal has surged by 57% over the past year. Essential commodities like vegetables and pulses have increased by nearly 150%. He also noted that despite a 34%

drop in crude oil prices, the central government has collected ₹36.58 lakh crore through high taxes and duties on petrol and diesel.

According to Kharge, inflation in the health sector has jumped by 14%, with common medicines becoming unaffordable for many. He criticized the imposition of 18% GST on life insurance, health insurance, and agricultural products, calling it unprecedented and detrimental to the public.

Additionally, he accused the central government of imposing ATM charge hikes from April and imposing fines amounting to ₹43,500 crores for non-maintenance of minimum deposits between 2018 and 2024. Rising toll rates and skyrocketing gas cylinder prices have further strained house-



hold budgets.

Kharge argued that over 100 crore Indians have lost purchasing power due to flawed economic policies. He insisted that while the state government has made some necessary price adjustments, the central government's policies

remain the primary cause of economic distress.

"If BJP leaders truly listen to the hearts of the people, their anger against the Centre will be evident," Kharge remarked, urging the BJP to shift its protest focus to the central government.

BJP Plans Statewide Protest Against Congress Government's Policies

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

On the occasion of the 118th birth anniversary of Trividha Dasohi Tumkur's Lingayakya Sri Shivakumara Swamiji, BJP state president BY Vijayendra visited Siddaganga Mutt in Tumkur on April 1. After offering prayers, Vijayendra addressed the media, revealing the party's plans for a statewide protest against the Congress government's policies.

According to Vijayendra, the BJP has decided to fight against the government's continued price hikes affecting essential commodities such as milk, electricity, water, petrol, diesel, and metro fares. He accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of imposing a 'guarantee of price hike' on the people over the last 20 months.



The BJP has planned a day-night protest at Freedom Park on April 2 at 11 am, condemning the state government's policies. The event will involve all BJP MLAs, MLCs, former MLAs, former MLCs, assembly election candidates, state office bearers, district presidents, and activists.

Vijayendra also criticized the Congress government for its decision to provide 4% res-

- BY Vijayendra to lead statewide foot march from Mysore on April 7
- BJP to hold large-scale protest at Freedom Park on April 2
- Accusations against Congress government for unjust allocation of funds

ervation to Muslims in government works, calling it an anti-constitutional move and an insult to Hindus. He alleged that the government diverted ₹38,000 crores meant for the social and educational development of Scheduled Castes and Tribes to other schemes.

He announced a statewide foot march starting from Mysore on April 7, beginning with prayers at Chamundi Hills. The march aims to raise awareness

against what the BJP describes as anti-people policies of the Congress government. Union Minister Pralhad Joshi is expected to launch the campaign.

Vijayendra further stated that the BJP will highlight the alleged injustice against exploited communities and misuse of SEP and TSP funds during the march. The party plans to cover all districts in Karnataka to bring awareness to the public.

- Yatnal denies rumors of joining Congress
- Hints at forming a new political party
- Accuses BJP leadership of corruption

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Expelled BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal has firmly rejected speculation about joining the Congress, stating, "I will never join the Congress in this life or the next." His comments come after images surfaced of him meeting Dharwad DCC (Rural) President Anilkumar Patil near Hiriyur, sparking rumors of a political shift.

Yatnal clarified that the

Not Joining Congress in This Life or Next: Expelled BJP MLA Yatnal

meeting was purely casual, as Patil is known to him from Vijayapura district. Patil echoed this, explaining that no political discussions took place during their brief encounter at a hotel in Tumakuru district.

Speaking to the media in Koppal, Yatnal alleged that the rumors were part of a smear campaign orchestrated by fake BJP social media accounts influenced by BJP state president B Y Vijayendra. He criticized the BJP for not prioritizing the interests of Hindus and accused Yediyurappa and Vijayendra of profiting during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The expelled leader also hinted at the possibility of forming his own political party if BJP leadership fails to remove Yediyurappa and Vijayendra.



He claimed support from rebel BJP leaders, including Ramesh Jarkiholi and Kumar Bangarappa.

"If the BJP fails to act, form-

ing a new party is guaranteed in the coming months," Yatnal declared, suggesting a potential realignment of Karnataka's political landscape.



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Former Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy has strongly criticized the Congress government for imposing multiple price hikes, accusing

it of exploiting the people of Karnataka to fill the state's coffers. Highlighting a series of tax and price increases, Kumaraswamy alleged that the government is running a "campaign of exploitation"

HD Kumaraswamy Criticizes Congress Govt Over Price Hikes

under the guise of its Panch Guarantee scheme.

From April 1, the government has introduced a garbage cess along with property tax, drawing widespread public opposition. HD Kumaraswamy condemned this move, accusing the Congress government of looting the people. According to him, the administration is targeting crores in revenue from the cess.

Listing the various price hikes imposed by the Congress government, Kumaras-

wamy mentioned increases in:

Water, Metro Rail, and KSRTC bus tickets
Milk (increased three times), curd, and electricity
Stamp duty, guide prices, and excise duty
Medical fees in government hospitals, post-mortem examination fees, lab tests

Professional tax and sowing seed prices

Kumaraswamy compared the current Congress

government to invaders like Mohammed Ghazni and Mohammed Ghorri, accusing it of plundering the state through relentless price hikes. He claimed that the government's poor management has transformed Karnataka into a "price goer," sucking the blood of the common people.

Echoing these sentiments, BJP state president B Y Vijayendra also condemned the Congress government, accusing it of imposing taxes on everything except air. He

stated that the Siddaramaiah government is punishing the very voters who elected it by making life unaffordable.

Opposition parties, including the BJP and JD(S), have accused the Congress of driving Karnataka toward economic hardship by continuously raising prices across essential services and daily necessities. Vijayendra stated that the government's anti-people policies are nothing but an attempt to exploit the common man for financial gain.

Bannerghatta Launches Anti-Snare Drive for Wildlife

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

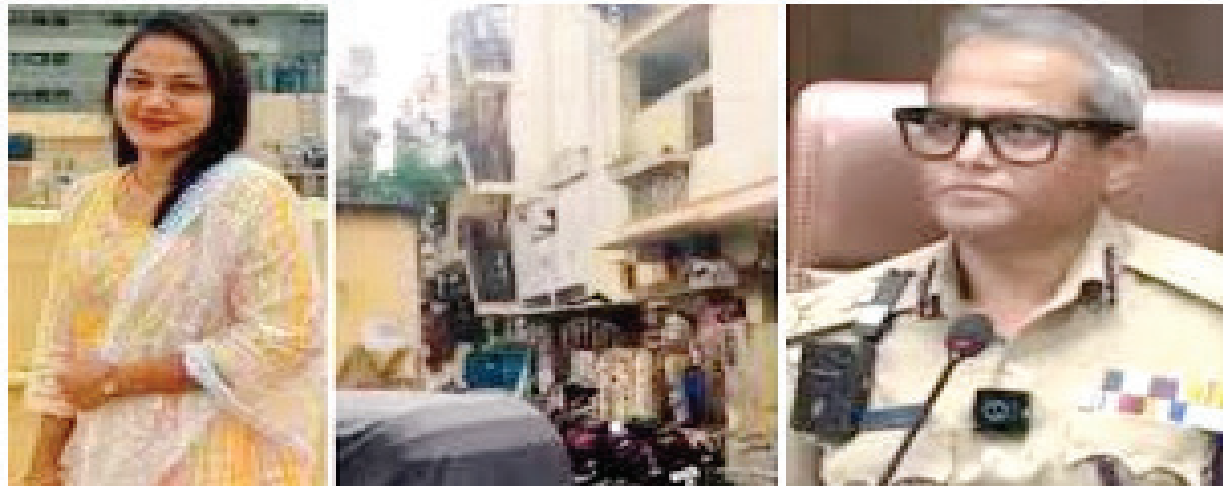
To combat poaching during the Hosatodaku festival, celebrated the day after Ugadi, Bannerghatta National Park (BNP) initiated an anti-snare drive on Monday, collaborating with A Rocha India and several NGOs. This drive aimed to increase vigilance in the area, particularly in light of the customary poaching practices during the festival, which marks “new beginnings” in the local culture. The operation involved a team of about 15 individuals, including forest department officials

and wildlife experts, and covered areas that are particularly vulnerable to poaching activities. A forest range officer mentioned that only one small snare was found during the drive, noting that such snares are typically set to capture smaller animals like rabbits. However, wildlife consultant Sharath Babu pointed out that although snares are often intended for smaller creatures, there have been incidents where larger animals like jackals and even leopards have been trapped. He cited a recent anti-snare drive on the Tam-

il Nadu side of Bannerghatta, where multiple snares were discovered. Avinash Krishnan, Director of Conservation and CEO of A Rocha, confirmed that the patrol focused on high-risk areas for poaching and added that while these anti-snare efforts are part of regular operations, the special drive was timed to coincide with the festival season to ensure the safety of wildlife. The park is taking active steps to send a strong message to local communities, reinforcing the importance of monitoring and patrolling the area for wildlife protection.



Bengaluru Police Capture Suspect in Murder



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru police have successfully apprehended Rakesh Rajendra Khedekar, the 36-year-old prime suspect in the gruesome murder of his wife, Gauri Anil Sambrekar (32), and brought him back from Maharashtra. The chilling incident unfolded last week when Rakesh allegedly killed Gauri at their rented house in Doddakammanahalli, near Hulimavu. Following the murder, he reportedly stuffed her body into a trolley bag before fleeing the scene and heading to Maharashtra. The body of Gauri was discovered inside the bag in the washroom on Thursday,

sending shockwaves through the community. After the incident, Rakesh attempted to take his own life by consuming phenyl and was hospitalized in Maharashtra. Once he was deemed stable and fit for travel, the Bengaluru police team successfully obtained a transit remand from a local court. They brought Rakesh back to Bengaluru on Saturday evening, where he was produced before a magistrate. He was subsequently remanded to judicial custody for 14 days. A senior officer from the Bengaluru police stated that they would soon seek a body warrant to take Rakesh into police custody for further

interrogation. Authorities assured that he was now stable and that the police had only proceeded with the transfer after receiving medical clearance. The investigation into the shocking murder continues as the police work to uncover the full details of the crime and Rakesh’s motives behind this brutal act. The case has garnered significant attention, and the authorities are committed to bringing justice to the victim. Further interrogations are expected to reveal more about the circumstances surrounding Gauri’s death, as well as any potential history of domestic violence or other factors leading to the tragedy.

Bengaluru Techie’s Rent Surge Matches Salary Hike

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A Bengaluru techie’s recent post has sparked a lively discussion among netizens about the rising cost of living in India’s tech cities, particularly Bengaluru. Ray, a tech employee in the city, shared his frustration on social media after receiving a 7.5% salary hike, only to discover that his landlord had raised the rent by 10%. He posted, “Salary hike I received was 7.5%, meanwhile BLR landlord increased the rent by 10%.” In a follow-up, Ray humorously yet pointedly remarked, “If this goes on, someday my rent will become more than my salary.” His post quickly went viral, accumulating over 480,000 views and resonating with many other individuals facing similar struggles. Numerous comments flooded the post, with many users sharing their own experiences of how the rising cost of living in Bengaluru is affecting their finances. One user wrote, “This is true for most IT employees in Bangalore and Hyderabad. Half of our salary goes into paying



rent, and the other half goes into paying taxes.” Another user humorously commented, “There should be a separate full-time course on how to become a landlord.” A third user lamented the lack of accountability in the country, suggesting that it might be better to move to the village to keep expenses low and avoid the pressures of city life. A fourth user added, “Housing costs are eating wages alive in tech cities. It might be better to return to your hometown and do some freelancing work.” These

comments reflect the growing sentiment that Bengaluru, often considered the IT hub of India, has become increasingly unaffordable for many. As housing costs continue to rise, more and more people, especially tech professionals, are considering relocating to their hometowns or exploring remote work opportunities. With Bengaluru’s cost of living consistently outpacing wage increases, Ray’s post highlights the urgent need for a balance between salaries and housing affordability.

Rowdy-Sheeteer Hacked to Death in Bengaluru

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A rowdy sheeteer was brutally hacked to death while celebrating Ugadi with friends on the outskirts of Bengaluru, sparking a police investigation into the crime. The victim, identified as Manjunath alias Nepali Manja (32), had been living with his parents in Kunigal, Tumakuru, for the past year. He was a rowdy sheeteer at the Hebbagodi police station in Bengaluru Rural district, known for his past involvement in criminal activities. On the evening of Sunday, April 30, Manjunath was invited by friends to Hebbagodi for an Ugadi party. The group spent the day together, consuming alcohol. As the celebrations progressed, an argument broke out between Manjunath and some of the suspects. What initially appeared to be a minor disagreement quickly escalated, leading to a violent confrontation. According to the preliminary probe, Manjunath was attacked with a machete, leaving him fatally injured. The attack took place between 10:40 pm and 10:45 pm. Following the murder, the Hebbagodi police



were alerted, and an investigation was launched. While the motive behind the crime is still unclear, the authorities are working to piece together the events that led to this tragic incident. Superintendent of Police (Bengaluru Rural), CK Baba, confirmed that the suspects had been identified, and special teams have been formed to arrest them. Manjunath, who had the nickname ‘Nepali’ due to his complexion, had a criminal history, including previous cases of murder, assault, and being booked under the Goonda Act. He had even been externed during the elections but had

not been active in recent times. A senior police officer mentioned that Manjunath had also recently started sporting a trendy beard, which added to his distinct appearance. The gruesome murder has shocked the local community, especially since it occurred during the festive season of Ugadi, a time typically associated with joy and new beginnings. The police are working tirelessly to uncover the full details of the crime and the motives behind it. As the investigation continues, the authorities are determined to bring those responsible for Manjunath’s death to justice.

KIA Introduces Kannada Language on Website

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru has taken a significant step towards enhancing the experience of its local travelers by introducing a Kannada language option on its official website. This move, implemented by the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), is part of the airport’s ongoing efforts to integrate the Kannada language more extensively within its services and operations. The decision aims to make it easier for Kannada-speaking passengers to navigate the airport’s services, whether it’s booking tickets, checking flight details, or obtaining other essential information. This development builds upon KIA’s long-standing initiative to make Kannada more prominent across the airport environment, ensuring that local passengers feel more connected and at ease while using the airport. By incorporating Kannada, BIAL expects to

bridge the language gap and offer a more seamless and user-friendly experience for a significant portion of the region’s population. The local language version of the website reflects the airport’s commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, as it caters to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the travelers who pass through the airport daily. With this new feature, KIA joins other modern airports across the world that have embraced multilingual platforms

to make traveling more convenient for their passengers. The Kannada language option is expected to further improve the airport’s reputation for customer service, making it more inviting and navigable for everyone, especially those who prefer to interact in their mother tongue. This move is also a recognition of the importance of preserving and promoting regional languages, highlighting KIA’s role in supporting the cultural and linguistic diversity of Bengaluru.



Karnataka Cab Drivers Support ‘Sahkar Taxi’ Initiative

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Karnataka’s cab drivers have largely welcomed the Central Government’s proposal to introduce ‘Sahkar Taxi’, a cooperative ride-hailing service designed to serve as an alternative to private aggregators such as Ola and Uber. Many cab drivers’ unions believe this initiative will reduce their reliance on private companies, which currently charge high commissions, significantly cutting into drivers’ earnings. According to The Hindu, C. Sampath, general secretary of the Adarsha Auto and Taxi Drivers’ Union, expressed optimism about the move, stating that the government-backed alternative could provide financial relief to drivers who have been struggling with high service fees for years. However, not all drivers share this enthusiasm. Some remain

skeptical about the execution of the cooperative model, fearing inefficiencies and bureaucratic delays.

Tanveer Pasha, president of the Ola Uber Drivers’ and Owners’ Association, cautioned that past government-backed projects have often failed due to poor execution, inefficiency, and delays in payments and bookings. In 2022, Bengaluru’s driver unions had urged the state Transport Department to regulate private ride-hailing apps and illegal bike taxi services, citing unfair pricing models and a lack of government oversight. While concerns about implementation persist, Union Home and Co-operation Minister Amit Shah has clarified that ‘Sahkar Taxi’ will not be government-operated but will instead be run by a cooperative formed by drivers themselves. Speak-

ing in the Lok Sabha during a discussion on the Tribhuvan Sahkari University Bill, 2025, Shah emphasized that the co-operative model would allow for the registration of taxis, rickshaws, and two-wheelers, ensuring that the profits benefit the drivers directly rather than being absorbed by private corporations. He reiterated that the government’s role would not be to run a business but to facilitate the cooperative’s formation under the principle of “Sahakar se Samriddhi” (Prosperity through Cooperation).

This structure is expected to function similarly to existing private aggregators but with a stronger financial focus on driver welfare. The move comes at a time when cab drivers have been vocal about the challenges they face, including fluctuating commission rates, lack of transparency in



pricing policies, and unfair competition from unregulated bike taxi services. If successfully implemented, ‘Sahkar Taxi’ could present a sustainable al-

ternative that enhances drivers’ financial stability while offering consumers a reliable and cost-effective transportation option. However, its suc-

cess will depend on effective execution and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles that have hindered similar initiatives in the past.



IMD Forecasts Rain, Thunderstorms in Karnataka

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted widespread rainfall across Karnataka over the coming days, with significant showers expected on April 3 and 4. Bengaluru, in particular, is likely to experience light to moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms from April 2 to 4. IMD Bengaluru director C.S. Patil stated that the temperature in the city is expected to drop by 3°C to 4°C between April 2 and 5, providing much-needed relief from the prevailing heat. The forecast suggests a shift

in weather patterns, bringing cooler temperatures and increased moisture, which could positively impact agriculture and water levels in the region. However, residents should remain cautious as thunderstorms may lead to disruptions in daily activities, including potential traffic congestion and power outages. The expected rainfall is part of a broader weather pattern affecting the state, and other parts of Karnataka may also witness similar weather conditions during this period. The IMD has urged citizens to stay updated on weather advisories and take

necessary precautions, particularly during heavy downpours. Farmers, in particular, have been advised to take necessary measures to protect their crops from excessive rainfall. The drop in temperature and rainfall is expected to provide temporary relief from rising temperatures, making the weather more pleasant for residents. While rainfall in this season is not uncommon, the intensity and duration will determine its overall impact. Authorities are closely monitoring the situation and advising people to stay prepared for weather fluctuations in the coming days.

Karnataka Police Busts Robbery Gang, Recovers 17 Kg Gold

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Karnataka Police have successfully busted a six-member gang involved in a major bank robbery and recovered 17.7 kg of stolen gold, officials confirmed on Monday. The gold was looted from the Nyamati branch of the State Bank of India (SBI) in Davangere on October 28, 2024, and was later discovered in a well in Usalamatti town of Madurai district, Tamil Nadu. The arrested suspects have been identified as Vijaykumar (30), his brother Ajaykumar (28), Abhisheka (23), Chandru (23), Manjunath (32), and Paramananda (30). According to the police, Vijaykumar and Ajaykumar are siblings, while Paramananda is their brother-in-law. The trio hails from Tamil Nadu but had been running a sweets business in Nyamati for several years, while the other three accused are residents of Nyamati.

During the investigation,

the police uncovered links to another notorious gang from Kakrala in the Budaun district of Uttar Pradesh, which had been involved in multiple bank heists across South India. The Kakrala gang has a history of bank robberies spanning over a decade, including a gold theft at an SBI branch in Rayaparathy, Warangal, in November 2024. Their modus operandi included targeting banks surrounded by open fields, breaking in through windows, using gas cutters, stealing digital video recorders (DVRs), and avoiding mobile phone usage to evade tracking.

Between November 2024 and February 2025, police teams conducted extensive operations across multiple states, including Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh, to track down the suspects. Based on intelligence gathered, five key members of the Kakrala gang—Guddu Kalia, Aslam, Hazarath Ali, Kamruddin, and



Babu Sahan—were arrested earlier this month. These criminals had been absconding in multiple property offence cases in Karnataka over the past decade, including a 15 kg gold heist from Karnataka Grameen Bank’s Hosahalli branch in November 2022 and a 4 kg gold theft from the Bevuru branch of the same bank.

This marks the first time that Karnataka Police has successfully apprehended members of the Kakrala gang, leading to fresh insights into a series of property crimes in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Actor Ranya Rao Seeks Bail in Gold Smuggling Case

Actor Ranya Rao, who was arrested last month in connection with a gold smuggling case, has approached the Karnataka High Court seeking bail after a sessions court denied her request on March 27. According to sources, the High Court is likely to take up the plea this or next week. The actor was taken into custody by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on March 3 after being caught smuggling 14.2 kg of gold, valued at Rs 14.56 crore, upon her arrival from Dubai at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru. Ms. Rao, the stepdaughter of senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Ramachandra Rao, was under DRI surveillance due to her frequent visits to Dubai—four times in just 15 days.

During a court hearing, the prosecution stated that the actor admitted to using hawala channels for purchasing gold, prompting authorities to

launch a judicial investigation into possible financial irregularities linked to her case. Tarun Raj, a close associate of Ms. Rao, has been identified as the second accused, while a gold merchant, Sahil Jain, who allegedly helped dispose of the smuggled gold, was also arrested last month. So far, three people have been arrested in connection with the case.

DRI lawyer Madhu Rao revealed that Ms. Rao and Mr. Raj traveled to Dubai at least 26 times, often departing in the morning and returning the same evening. Investigators suspect that Ms. Rao concealed gold in her clothing and wore some of it to evade detection.



Following her arrest, authorities raided her residence, recovering gold jewelry worth over Rs 2 crore and cash amounting to Rs 2.67 crore.

Meanwhile, her stepfather, IPS officer Ramachandra Rao, denied any involvement in the crime and expressed shock over her arrest.

The investigation is ongoing as officials attempt to uncover further financial links and individuals connected to the smuggling network.



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 co-operation 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.

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.

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.



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.



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.

'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 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.





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

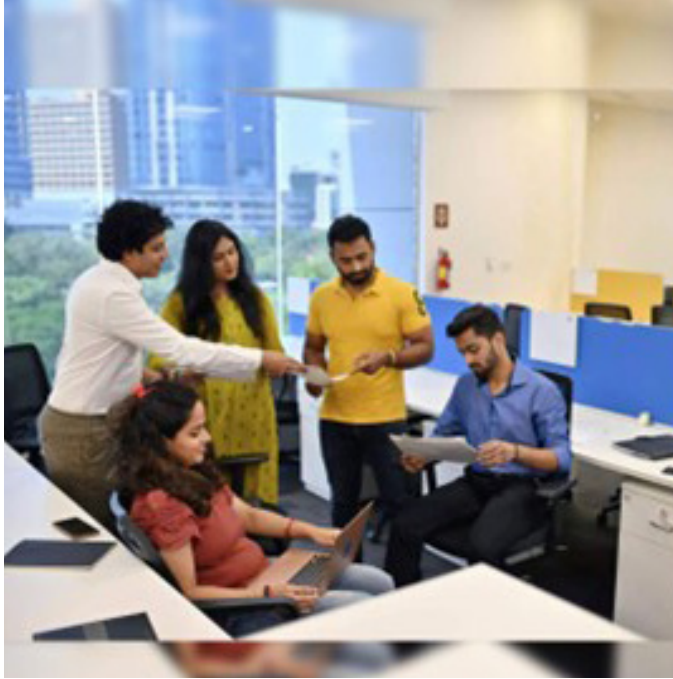
the ongoing rivalry between Musk and Altman. Earlier this year, Musk and a group of investors attempted to purchase OpenAI. Musk claimed the bid aimed to prevent OpenAI from becoming a for-profit entity. However, Altman rejected the offer, stating that OpenAI was “not for sale.” He also accused Musk, 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 Gurudwara 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 Prabhsimran 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



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-

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.

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.

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.

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 Shivrj Kumar, Divyendu, and Jagapathi Babu in crucial roles. The movie is being jointly produced by Maitri Movie Makers, Virdi 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

Ilayathalapathy Vijay's 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.

