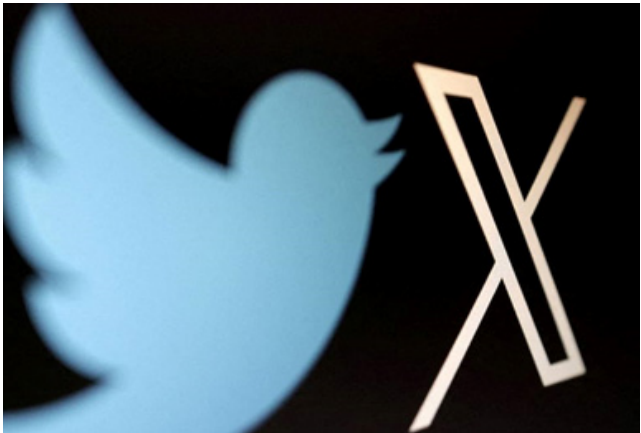


Karnataka HC Declines Relief to X Corp in Plea Against Sahyog Portal

- X Corp’s petition posted for final hearing on April 24
- Solicitor General emphasizes adherence to Indian laws
- X Corp argues against arbitrary application of Section 79(3)(b)

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday scheduled X Corp’s petition against the Centre’s Sahyog portal for final hearing on April 24, following an agreement that no interim order was necessary. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the union government, reiterated that any entity operating in India must comply with Indian laws. Mehta compared X Corp’s role as an intermediary to a notice board where various messages could be posted, emphasizing that compliance with legal requirements is essential. He assured the court that no immediate adverse action would be taken against X Corp before the final hearing. Senior advocate KG Raghvan, representing X Corp, argued that the exemption granted under Section 79(1) for safe harbor is being undermined by arbitrary orders issued under Section 79(3)(b). Raghvan expressed concerns about the authority granted to various officers, including tax recovery officers, un-



der Section 79(3)(b) without adhering to safeguards under Section 69A of the IT Act. Raghvan also highlighted that the 2021 Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules have superseded the 2011 rules, but the scope of the Act cannot be expanded by mere rule changes. He insisted that Section 79(3)(b) should align with procedural safeguards established under Section 69A, as outlined in the Shreya Singhal case. The court granted X Corp the liberty to seek protection if any adverse action is taken against it before the final hearing.

Karnataka Govt Blames Centre for Price Hike Amid BJP’s Protest

- State Ministers accuse Centre’s economic policies of causing price rise
- Deputy CM claims price hikes were necessary due to lack of funds from Centre
- BJP’s protest labeled as politically motivated and anti-farmer

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

As the BJP staged an overnight protest in Bengaluru against recent price hikes, Karnataka’s Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, Home Minister Dr. G Parameshwara, and RDPR & IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge attributed the increase to the Union Government’s economic policies. Dr. Parameshwara stated that the price rise was not exclusive to Karnataka but was happening nationwide due to flawed central policies. He emphasized that Karnataka was not receiving its rightful share in the devolution of taxes, forc-

ing the State Government to raise prices for essential commodities to generate revenue. He clarified that the price hikes were unrelated to the state’s guarantee schemes, for which Rs. 51,000 crore was allocated in the budget. Shivakumar defended the recent Rs. 4 per litre hike in milk prices, stating it was intended to assist farmers and that Karnataka’s rates were still lower compared to other Southern states. Dismissing BJP’s protest as politically driven, he labeled it as anti-farmer and accused the opposition of playing politics over genuine policy decisions. Meanwhile, Minister Priyank Kharge also blamed the Centre’s economic policies for the ongoing crisis. He remarked that the State Government’s decisions were necessitated by financial constraints imposed by inadequate funding from the Union Government.



Minimum Wages in Karnataka to Be Revised, May Top Country

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka is set to potentially offer the highest minimum wages for skilled and unskilled labourers in the country, with a wage revision notification expected in the next two weeks. The revision will cover 82 types of scheduled jobs across categories including unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, and highly-skilled workers. According to the 2022 notification by the Labour Department, minimum wages in Karnataka range from Rs 12,000 to Rs 20,000 per month. Karnataka has approximately 1.7 crore workers employed across organised and unorganised sectors. Labour Minister Santosh Lad stated that the draft notification on wage revision will be presented to the Karnataka Minimum Wage Advisory Board for recommendations. Trade unions are demanding a significant increase, proposing a minimum wage of Rs 35,000 per month. Official sources indicated that Karnataka’s revised wages are expected to surpass the current highest minimum wages in India, which are in



Delhi, ranging from Rs 17,000 to Rs 23,000 per month. Jayaram KR, Joint Secretary of the Garment and Textile Workers’ Union, criticized the disparity between garment and non-garment sector wages, noting that garment workers earn Rs 470 per day compared to Rs 651 per day for non-garment workers. With approximately 4.5 lakh garment workers in Karnataka, most residing in Bengaluru, Jayaram highlighted the difficulty of surviving on low wages in a city with a high cost of living. Minister Lad reiterated that the revision process is ongoing and that the government aims to finalize it within 15 days.

BJP Stages Overnight Protest Over Price Hike in Karnataka

- BJP vows statewide protests until price hikes are rolled back
- Yediyurappa accuses government of neglecting development and public interest
- Vijayendra criticizes failure in implementing guarantee schemes

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

BJP leaders, led by former Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, staged an overnight dharna at Freedom Park in Bengaluru to protest against the Karnataka government’s decision to increase prices of various commodities. Yediyurappa declared that protests would continue across the state until the government rolled back the price hikes. The senior BJP leader accused the Congress government of halting development work and neglecting irrigation projects. He urged BJP workers to spread awareness among the public about the government’s alleged failures, describing it as a “Tughlaq-style government” that has lost sight of public welfare. BJP state president BY Vijayendra criticized Chief Minister Siddaramaiah for not understanding the people’s



struggles, suggesting he travel across the state to gauge the issues faced by common citizens. He also accused the government of failing to implement promised guarantee schemes, such as Gruha Lakshmi, and burdening the public with increased prices for petrol, diesel, milk, and government hospital fees. Leader of Opposition R Ashoka highlighted that the Nagmohan Das com-

mittee, formed to investigate the 40% commission allegations against the previous BJP government, found no substantial evidence. He accused the Congress of deceiving the public with false claims to gain power. The protest at Freedom Park featured cultural performances like Yakshagana and street plays mocking the state government’s decisions, further amplifying BJP’s message.

1st Page Cont..

BJP Leaders March to Lay Siege to Karnataka CM’s House, Taken Into Preventive Custody

The agitation, which began with a day-and-night protest at Freedom Park against price rise, 4% reservation for Muslims in government contracts, and alleged diversion of funds meant for Scheduled Caste Sub Plan and Scheduled Tribes Sub Plan, escalated into the march towards the CM’s residence. Vijayendra stated that the party is raising these three issues to the people through its protests. The BJP has also planned a ‘Jana-

krosha Yatra’ (Public Outrage March) starting from April 7, to be flagged off by Union Minister Pralhad Joshi in Mysuru. The first phase will cover districts like Mysuru, Chamarajanagar, Mandya, Hassan, Kodagu, Mangaluru, Udupi, and Chikkamagaluru, concluding on April 10. The second phase, starting on April 13, will cover Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada, with plans to reach every district through padayatras.

Minister Calls for Deeper Probe into ‘40% Commission’ Allegations

Minister Parameshwara emphasized that the Congress party had made the allegation a significant issue during the 2023 Assembly elections. He expressed hope that further investigation would yield additional evidence, hinting that the Commission’s current report might only be interim. BJP state president BY Vijayendra dismissed the allegations as “propaganda” by the Congress to gain power. Acknowledging his party’s

failure to effectively counter the allegations, Vijayendra said, “The ‘40 per cent Commission’ allegation was made, we faltered and Congress came to power...it’s a closed chapter. There’s no evidence for the allegation.” The Karnataka government may seek further inquiry to substantiate or refute the allegations, as political tensions over the issue continue.

Karnataka HC Bans Bike Taxi Services Like Uber, Rapido, Ola



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Karnataka High Court has banned app-based bike taxi services like Uber, Rapido, and Ola, directing them to halt operations within the next six weeks. The state government has been granted three months to bring bike taxi services under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. The High Court remarked that these ride-hailing operators have violated the Motor Vehicles Act, with numerous complaints alleging misconduct by bike taxi drivers towards women. It clar-

ified that the ban will continue until the state government formulates appropriate rules under Section 93 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988. Until then, bike taxi services from companies like Uber, Rapido, and Ola will not be permitted to operate. Two-wheelers with white number plates will not be allowed for commercial use. The court emphasized that proper legislation is necessary and refused to order the transport department to grant permits for two-wheelers to be recognized as transport vehicles.

Kannada Actress Ranya Rao, Jeweller Linked to ₹40 Crore Gold Smuggling - DRI

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has exposed a major gold smuggling racket involving Kannada actress Harshavardhini Ranya, also known as Ranya Rao, and jeweller Sahil Sakariya Jain. According to the DRI’s remand note, Jain assisted Ranya in disposing of 49.6 kg of smuggled gold worth ₹40.14 crore and facilitated hawala money transfers linked to the operation. Jain, arrested on March 26, remains in judicial custody until April 7. The agency revealed that unaccounted cash amounting to ₹2.67 crore was seized from Ranya’s residence on March 4, which they suspect is hawala money derived from selling gold bought in Dubai and sold in Bengaluru. Jain admitted to receiving a commission of ₹55,000 per

transaction. In January 2025, Jain reportedly helped Ranya dispose of 14.568 kg of gold worth ₹11.56 crore and transferred ₹11.01 crore through hawala to Dubai. In February, he assisted in smuggling 13.433 kg of gold worth ₹11.81 crore and facilitated ₹11.25 crore in hawala funds to Dubai, along with ₹55.81 lakh to Ranya in Bengaluru. Jain’s devices, including two mobile phones and a laptop, contained substantial evidence proving his role in the smuggling network. Ranya, the stepdaughter of a DGP-rank officer in Karnataka, was arrested on March 3 at Kempegowda International Airport after returning from Dubai with 14.7 kg of gold in her possession. The investigation continues as officials gather more evidence to unravel the entire operation.



Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar Declines to Comment on Basangouda Patil Yatnal’s Expulsion

TPN Correspondent |
Karnataka

Karnataka Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar chose not to comment on the expulsion of BJP MLA Basangouda Patil Yatnal during a press conference held in the city. Responding to questions about Yatnal’s removal from the BJP, Hebbalkar stated that she did not wish to speak about his expulsion, emphasizing that it was a personal matter.

Acknowledging her previous association with Yatnal in the fight for 2A reservation for the Pan-



chamasali community, Hebbalkar clarified that his expulsion from the BJP and his future decisions were entirely his own concern. “If he has made allegations against my party, I will respond. Otherwise,

it is his personal matter,” she added.

The minister’s remarks come amid ongoing political tensions within the BJP following Yatnal’s expulsion. Yatnal, known for his vocal advocacy for the

- Minister avoids remarks on expelled BJP MLA Yatnal
- Says expulsion and future decisions are personal matters
- Will respond only if allegations are made against her party

Panchamasali community’s 2A reservation, has frequently clashed with party leadership over various issues.

Hebbalkar’s neutral stance highlights the delicate political landscape in Karnataka, where leaders

prefer to distance themselves from internal disputes of other parties. Political analysts believe her comments were aimed at maintaining focus on her party’s agenda rather than engaging in the BJP’s internal conflicts.



JDS Upset Over BJP’s Solo Protest Against Karnataka Government

TPN Correspondent |
Karnataka

With BJP leaders staging a night-long dharna against the Karnataka government over price hikes, JD(S) leaders have expressed displeasure over being excluded from the protest. JD(S) Assembly leader Suresh Babu criticized the BJP for fighting the issue alone without involving their alliance partner.

Babu pointed out that even during last year’s padayatra against the MUDA scam, the BJP did not include the JD(S). He emphasized that as alliance partners, such issues should be addressed together for greater impact.

He appealed to BJP leaders to form a coordination committee to ensure both parties can present a united front. “If we fight against the state government together, we will have a stronger voice. We can reach more people,” he said, adding that

the lack of coordination is unknown to central BJP leaders.

JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy has also advocated for creating a coordination committee to address common concerns. Following the BJP’s announcement of their protest, Nikhil stated that JD(S) would also fight against price hikes but independently if necessary.

In response, BJP state president BY Vijayendra acknowledged the concerns raised by JD(S) leaders. While noting that the JD(S) recently fought separately against the Greater Bengaluru Governance Bill, Vijayendra described the current disagreement as a minor misunderstanding.

“We will talk to them and resolve the issue. We welcome the proposal for a coordination committee,” Vijayendra said, expressing optimism about working together with the JD(S) for a common cause.

BS Yediyurappa Boosts Morale of Protesting BJP Leaders with His Arrival

TPN Correspondent |
Karnataka

Former Chief Minister and senior BJP leader BS Yediyurappa reaffirmed his influence in Karnataka politics by boosting the morale of protesting BJP leaders and workers with his arrival at Freedom Park. The protest, organized against the BJP government over rising prices, saw a surge of enthusiasm as Yediyurappa joined the demonstrators.

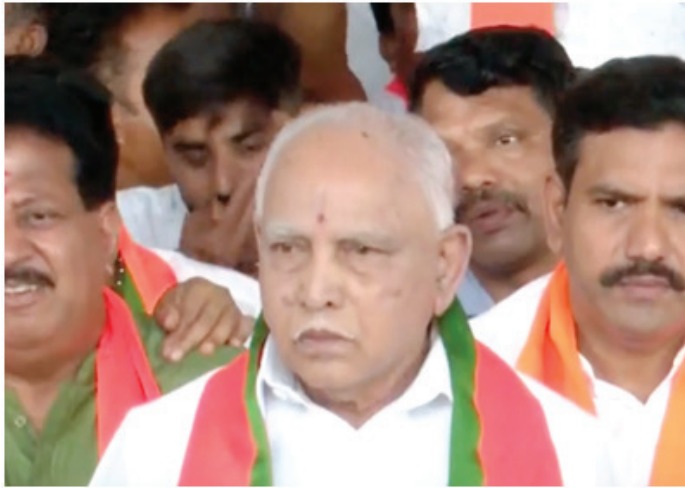
Known for his mass appeal and farmer-friendly image, Yediyurappa was welcomed with loud cheers and slogans praising

- Yediyurappa joins protest against BJP government over price hike
- Workers’ enthusiasm doubles upon his arrival at Freedom Park
- Welcomed with cheers for his leadership and farmer-friendly image

him as a leader of the poor and farmers. His arrival at the protest site instantly energized the crowd, with many acknowledging his continued relevance and support among the party cadre.

Despite stepping down

from the Chief Minister’s post, Yediyurappa’s influence remains unparalleled within Karnataka BJP. His participation in the protest is seen as a strong message of solidarity with the workers and leaders rallying against



the price hike.

Political analysts note that Yediyurappa’s continued engagement with party activities and pro-

tests reflects his desire to maintain a stronghold over state politics and remain a guiding force for the BJP in Karnataka.



Another Blow for Jailed Former MP Prajwal Revanna Over Rape Case

TPN Correspondent |
Karnataka

Former MP Prajwal Revanna, who is currently lodged in Parappana Agrahara Jail, has suffered another legal setback in the ongoing rape case against him. The Bengaluru Special Court of People’s Representatives has dismissed his application seeking dismissal from the case, delivering a major blow to the former parliamentarian. The hearing of the case has now been postponed to April 9.

Prajwal Revanna had earlier approached the Karnataka High Court, seeking access to electronic evidence, including photos and videos seized from mobile phones. However, a bench headed by Justice M. Nagaprasanna rejected his plea, stating that legal standards could not be altered due to his status.

The case has drawn significant attention due to the severity of the allegations. A total of four cases, including a pornographic video case, have been

registered against Prajwal Revanna. In August, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) investigating the matter submitted a comprehensive 2,144-page charge sheet. Following this, Revanna’s bail applications were repeatedly dismissed by the courts.

The allegations stem from a complaint filed by a woman from Hassan, leading to cases being registered under various sections of the IPC and Information Technology Act at the Cyber Crime Police Station in Bengaluru. The SIT is overseeing the investigation.

The controversy intensified during the Lok Sabha elections when pen drives containing obscene videos, allegedly linked to Prajwal Revanna, were distributed in Hassan. Some of these videos later went viral on social media. Both the Karnataka High Court and the Supreme Court have rejected Revanna’s bail petitions, further complicating his legal troubles.

Those Opposing Waqf Amendment Bill Are Traitors: Pramod Muthalik

TPN Correspondent |
Karnataka

Shri Ram Sena President Pramod Muthalik has praised the Narendra Modi-led central government’s decision to implement the Waqf Amendment Bill, calling it a commendable and much-needed step. Speaking to the media, Muthalik asserted that the bill is aimed at curbing decades-long exploitation of land under the Waqf Board’s control.

Muthalik stated that those opposing the bill are protecting illegal land dealings and labeled them as ‘traitors.’ “Those who



were looting land in the name of the Waqf Board for decades have been stopped. Those who stood by the looters should be ashamed, they are traitors,” he declared.

Referring to the recent debates in the Lok Sabha, Muthalik mentioned that

AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge’s name was brought up in connection with alleged land misappropriation under the Waqf Board. However, he did not provide evidence to support these claims.

The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, recently passed

in the Lok Sabha, has triggered intense political discussions. While the government maintains that the bill aims to enhance transparency and empower minorities, opposition parties have criticized it as harmful to the interests of the Muslim community.

Muthalik dismissed these criticisms as politically motivated and accused the opponents of supporting unlawful practices. He claimed the bill was necessary to protect public and private lands from exploitation under the guise of Waqf properties.

“This decision by the

government is a step towards justice. Those who oppose it are only proving their alignment with wrongdoers,” Muthalik added.

Muthalik’s statements have drawn strong reactions from political leaders and community representatives who argue that the bill undermines minority rights. However, his comments are expected to resonate with right-wing groups supporting the legislation.

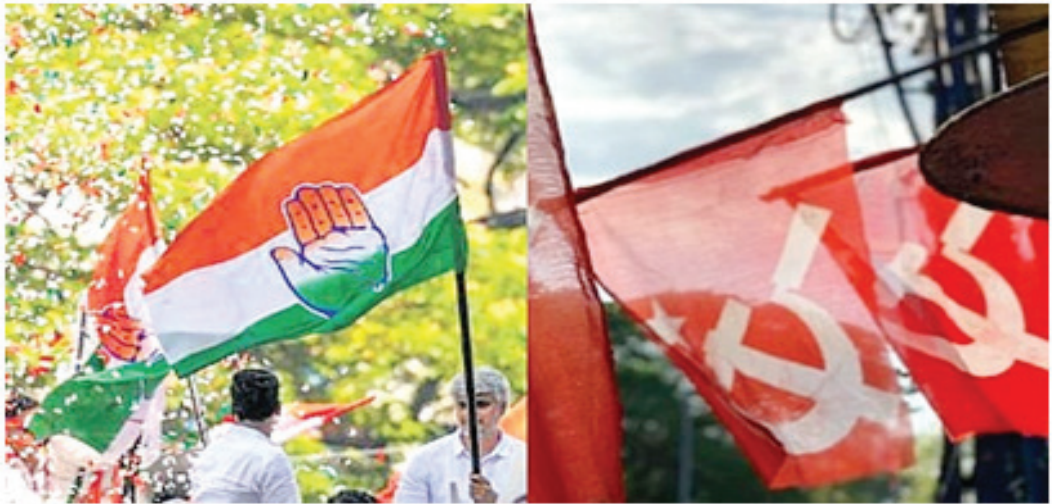
The controversy surrounding the bill continues as political parties prepare for further debates over its implications.

UDF, Left MPs Stand United Against Waqf Amendment Bill

TPN Correspondent |
Thiruvananthapuram

MPs from Kerala’s UDF and LDF set aside political differences to jointly oppose the Waqf Amendment Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha, despite warnings from the Christian Church. Apart from Union Minister Suresh Gopi, all Kerala MPs criticized the BJP government’s intentions behind introducing the bill.

CPM MP K Radhakrishnan invoked Martin Niemöller’s poem ‘First They Came’ to argue that the BJP’s targeting of Muslims on Thursday could extend to other communities. He recalled an incident from



1987, where Hindutva forces allegedly protested against a Christian being elected to the Devaswom board, only to later discover he was Hindu.

Union Minister Suresh Gopi, reacting to being

named during the discussion, dismissed the concerns raised, asserting that resolutions passed by the Kerala Assembly opposing the bill would be nullified once the Rajya Sabha passes it.

Congress MP K C Venugopal accused the BJP of targeting religious minorities, referencing attacks on 753 churches across India. He also claimed that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad was formed during the

Pope’s visit to India over alleged conversion concerns.

IUML MP E T Muham-mad Basheer strongly criticized Home Minister Amit Shah’s remarks of being a champion for minorities, calling it the “biggest joke of 2025.” Basheer accused the government of harassing minorities socially, economically, and mentally while weakening the Waqf Board’s authority over property disputes.

Other MPs like Francis George of Kerala Congress and Hibi Eden of Congress also opposed the bill, arguing that the rights of religious minorities guaranteed by the Constitution were being undermined.

Two Men Arrested for Assaulting Woman

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru police have arrested two men, identified as Asif and Syed, for allegedly raping a woman from Bihar near KR Puram railway station in the early hours of Thursday. According to police reports, the survivor was traveling with her brother from Kerala to Bihar and had stepped out of the train around 1:20 am to get dinner when the incident occurred. The suspects, who were sitting in an autorickshaw nearby, noticed them and intercepted the siblings. They first attacked the woman's brother, physically assaulting him before forcibly taking her to a secluded and poorly lit area near the railway station. The victim's brother, left injured and helpless, was

unable to prevent the attack. However, a passerby noticed the commotion and stepped in to assist. Soon after, night-beat police officers arrived at the scene, preventing the suspects from fleeing. The two men were immediately detained, and legal procedures for their formal arrest are currently underway.

The case has once again raised serious concerns about women's safety in Bengaluru, particularly in transit areas that remain inadequately monitored at night. KR Puram railway station, a significant transport hub, has been a cause for concern due to the presence of dark and isolated spots, making it vulnerable to criminal activities. The absence of sufficient lighting and

security surveillance has made it an unsafe zone for passengers traveling late at night. Bengaluru police have assured swift action against the accused and have initiated a thorough investigation to gather substantial evidence, including CCTV footage and witness testimonies, to build a strong case against the perpetrators. Meanwhile, authorities have advised travelers, especially women, to remain cautious while commuting during late hours and to use designated safe zones at railway stations whenever possible.

The incident has sparked widespread outrage, with citizens and women's rights activists demanding increased police patrolling, better security infrastructure, and stricter



legal enforcement to prevent such crimes. Many have called for urgent measures, such as

improved lighting, surveillance cameras, and awareness campaigns, to ensure public spaces

remain safe for women, especially in areas with a high footfall during odd hours.

Teen Dies After Mistakenly Drinking Herbicide

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A tragic incident in Bengaluru claimed the life of a 14-year-old girl after she accidentally consumed herbicide, mistaking it for aloe vera juice. The unfortunate event took place on March 14 in Deepanjali Nagar near Byatarayanapura. According to police reports, the girl unknowingly ingested the toxic substance because her parents had stored the herbicide in an empty aloe vera liquid bottle without proper labeling. Shortly after consuming the liquid, she began experiencing severe health complications. Her family, realizing the mistake, immediately rushed her to the hospital, where doctors worked tirelessly to save her life. However, despite their best efforts, she failed to respond to treatment and tragically passed away on April 1. Following the



incident, the police registered an unnatural death report (UDR) and initiated an investigation to determine the circumstances leading to the mishap. It was revealed that the girl's father was at work at the time, while her mother, a homemaker, was present at home. Authorities have since issued warnings, urging parents and

caregivers to exercise extreme caution when storing hazardous substances such as pesticides and herbicides within household premises. Officials emphasized that proper labeling, secure storage, and heightened awareness are crucial to preventing similar tragedies in the future. The heartbreaking case has sparked a larger

conversation about household safety and the potential dangers of improper storage of toxic chemicals. Safety advocates and health experts are now calling for stricter regulations, mandatory labeling practices, and awareness campaigns to educate families on responsible handling and storage of hazardous substances. Many believe that such preventable deaths highlight the need for better public education on safety measures related to common household chemicals. As this incident serves as a grim reminder of how a small oversight can result in devastating consequences, it reinforces the importance of vigilance in every home. Authorities continue to investigate, but the focus remains on spreading awareness and preventing such accidents from recurring in other households.

Bengaluru Teachers Booked for Forcing Students to Clean Toilets

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Two teachers from a government high school in south-eastern Bengaluru have been booked for allegedly forcing students to clean school toilets. The incident, which took place on January 16 at Government High School, Begur, came to light after social worker Nagesh from Seshadripuram filed a complaint. Though the act occurred earlier in the year, Nagesh became aware of it through media reports and immediately brought the matter to the attention of the authorities. Following his complaint, the Begur police registered a First Information Report (FIR) against headmistress Sakamma and physical education teacher Sumitramma. The complaint alleged that students, primarily from underprivileged backgrounds, were forced to clean the toilets

instead of focusing on their education. The disturbing revelation has prompted both the police and the school education department to launch separate investigations into the matter. A senior police officer confirmed that inquiries are ongoing, and further action will be determined based on their findings. The case has sparked outrage among parents and activists, who are demanding strict action against those responsible. Many believe that such practices violate the dignity and rights of students, highlighting the need for stronger policies to prevent exploitation within educational institutions. The incident has reignited discussions about the treatment of students in government schools and the necessity of better oversight to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment for all children.

Bengaluru Braces for Heavy Rain as IMD Issues Yellow Alert



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Bengaluru is set to experience heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and gusty winds on April 3, 2025, as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for the city.

Due to a cyclonic circulation in the Bay of Bengal, which has intensified into a depression off the Odisha coast, temperatures are expected to drop by 3 to 4 degrees Celsius. The Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) has predicted continued cloudy conditions and moderate to heavy rainfall across several regions of Karnataka over the next five days. Meanwhile, an orange alert has been issued

for multiple districts in North Interior Karnataka, warning of thunderstorms, lightning, and strong winds.

According to an IMD press release, this pattern of sporadic rainfall is likely to persist in the coming days. Some areas in Karnataka have already experienced significant temperature drops, with Chikkamagaluru and Hassan recording maximum temperatures 7.5 degrees and 6 degrees below normal, respectively. Other districts, including Bidar, Bagalkote, Vijayapura, Chitradurga, Davangere, Kodagu, and Mysuru, have seen temperatures dip 2 to 4 degrees below normal. The IMD has also warned of possible isolated inundation in certain regions.

In Bengaluru, multiple neighborhoods, including Bellandur, HAL, CV Raman Nagar, Hoodi, KR Puram, Koramangala, Marathahalli, HSR Layout, Whitefield, and Hennur, are expected to be impacted by heavy rains. Reports and visuals from residents highlight waterlogging in various locations, such as Aghara flyover and Krishna Temple Road in Indiranagar.

Over the next 48 hours, Bengaluru's maximum and minimum temperatures are forecasted to be around 29°C and 20°C, respectively.

Authorities urge citizens to exercise caution, particularly during peak hours, as heavy rain may lead to disruptions in traffic and daily activities.

Masked Gang Robs ₹10 Lakh, Gold from Bengaluru Club

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A shocking robbery took place at Bengaluru Vihara Kendra, a social club in Thyagaraja Nagar, on the evening of March 31, when a gang of over five masked men stormed into a room where 10 friends were playing cards to celebrate Ugadi. Armed with weapons, the gang looted cash and gold worth several lakhs before making a swift escape.

According to reports, the victims were in the middle of a card game around 6 p.m. when a knock on the door interrupted them. As Ramesh, the complainant, opened the door, the intruders forced their way in,

brandishing weapons. The gang threatened the players, compelling them to undress and surrender all their valuables. In a matter of minutes, they managed to seize approximately ₹10 lakh in cash and 700 grams of gold.

To prevent any immediate alarm, they confiscated the victims' mobile phones and clothing before locking them inside the room. The robbers then fled the scene, leaving the victims trapped and helpless.

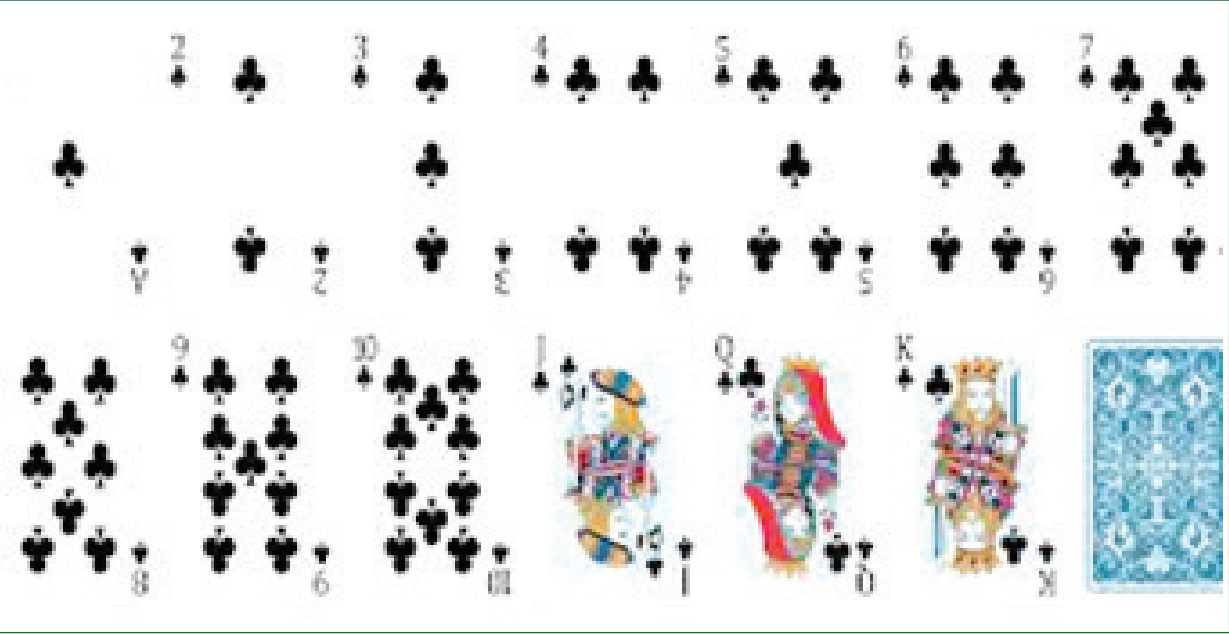
Once the victims managed to break free, they alerted the police, who have since launched an investigation into the incident. Authorities are examining CCTV footage

from the area and questioning potential witnesses to track down the culprits.

Given the meticulous execution of the crime, police suspect that the gang may have had prior knowledge of the game and the high stakes involved.

This brazen heist has left the community in shock, raising concerns over security at social clubs in the city.

Law enforcement officials have urged citizens to remain cautious and report any suspicious activities immediately. The investigation is ongoing, with police determined to identify and apprehend the perpetrators at the earliest.



Karnataka Diesel Price Hike Sparks Outrage

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Karnataka government's decision to increase the sales tax on diesel from 18.44% to 21.17% has led to widespread protests and backlash from various sectors, including lorry operators, logistics firms, private bus owners, and cab drivers. Effective from April 1, 2025, this tax hike has resulted in an immediate rise in diesel prices by ₹2.05 per litre, further burdening the transport industry, which is already grappling with high operational costs. In response, the Karnataka Lorry Owners Association, supported by independent truck drivers and petrol pump owners, has announced an indefinite strike starting from 10 a.m. on Saturday, demanding that the government hold a state-level meeting to address their griev-

ances. The protestors argue that the fuel price hike will have a cascading effect on the economy, increasing the cost of essential goods and public transportation, ultimately affecting common citizens. Many logistics companies have warned that freight charges will be revised upwards, which could impact supply chains and lead to inflationary pressures across multiple industries.

Private bus operators and cab drivers, who heavily rely on diesel, have also expressed their concerns, stating that their earnings will be significantly affected, and they may be forced to pass on the additional costs to passengers. Meanwhile, petrol pump owners fear reduced sales as customers might seek alternatives or cut down on fuel consumption. The transport sector has

urged the government to reconsider its decision, highlighting that Karnataka already has one of the highest fuel tax rates in the country.

Many industry experts have pointed out that instead of increasing taxes on fuel, the state should explore alternative revenue-generation methods that do not directly impact the transportation sector and the cost of living. Political opposition parties have also criticized the move, accusing the government of placing undue financial pressure on businesses and citizens. They have called for immediate discussions and potential rollbacks to prevent further disruption in essential services and trade. The indefinite strike, if not addressed promptly, is expected to cause significant disruptions in logistics, goods transportation,



and commuter services across Karnataka. As tensions continue to rise, the focus remains on

whether the government will engage with stakeholders and find a middle ground to miti-

gate the impact of the tax hike while addressing revenue concerns.

Kerala Muslim Groups Oppose Waqf Bill

TPN Correspondent | Kerala

Muslim organizations in Kerala, along with political parties like the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), have strongly opposed the passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha, sparking widespread protests across the state. The IUML State president, Panakkad Syed Sadikali Shihab Thangal, and the party's national general secretary, P.K. Kunhalikutty, have announced that the bill will be legally challenged, emphasizing that it threatens the rights and autonomy of Waqf properties. Protests erupted in various parts of Kerala, with Muslim Youth League workers staging demonstrations and burning copies of the bill in Malappuram to express their dissent. The bill, which aims to amend existing Waqf regulations, has been met with strong resistance from community leaders, who argue that it undermines the administration and management of Waqf assets, which are religious endowments for charitable and religious purposes in the Muslim community. Critics of the bill claim that it imposes excessive governmental control over



Waqf properties, potentially affecting their usage and governance. They also accuse the government of attempting to interfere with religious institutions, arguing that such legislative changes should have been introduced only after thorough consultation with community representatives. The IUML leaders have stated that they will explore all legal options to challenge the bill, calling on other political and religious groups to unite against what they describe as an unjust move. Meanwhile, protests are expected to intensify, with religious and

political leaders planning further demonstrations and discussions to mobilize support against the bill. Opposition parties in Kerala have also joined the outcry, condemning what they see as an encroachment on minority rights. The issue has triggered a broader debate about the governance of religious institutions and the role of the state in managing them. As the controversy continues to unfold, all eyes are now on how the legal battle against the bill will shape up and whether the government will reconsider its position in light of the mounting opposition.

Kerala HC Demands Strict Action on Reckless Driving

TPN Correspondent | Kerala

The Kerala High Court has called for stricter measures against reckless driving, emphasizing the need for consistent enforcement rather than reactive measures taken only after accidents. The court's remarks came while reviewing an action-taken report submitted by the State government in response to a tragic accident at Menaka on March 14, 2025, in which a woman two-wheeler rider lost her life. The accident was reportedly caused by the reckless driving of two private buses owned by the same individual, bringing renewed attention to the dangers posed by rash and negligent driving on Kerala's roads. The State government, in its report, outlined various steps that enforcement agencies have implemented to curb reckless driving by buses, including increased surveillance, stricter penalties, and awareness campaigns. However, the High Court, while appreciating these efforts, stated that they were insufficient and needed to be continued, persistent, and not limited to knee-jerk reactions after accidents occur. The court stressed that a strong deterrent was required to instill fear of the law



among bus drivers and vehicle operators, ensuring that they do not assume they can escape consequences for dangerous driving. The court further observed that reckless driving has become a major concern, endangering the lives of pedestrians and motorists alike.

It highlighted the need for stricter enforcement of existing traffic laws, deployment of more traffic personnel, and the use of technology such as speed cameras and automated monitoring systems to track violations in real time. Additionally, the court urged authorities to take action against bus operators who pressure drivers to meet unrealistic time schedules, often leading to dangerous competition

on the roads. The tragedy at Menaka has intensified public demand for safer roads and stricter enforcement. Families of accident victims and road safety activists have repeatedly called for stronger penalties for reckless driving, including cancellation of licenses and criminal charges against habitual offenders. The Kerala High Court's strong stance has added weight to these demands, putting pressure on the government to take immediate and long-term measures to prevent further loss of life. As the case progresses, authorities are expected to intensify their crackdown on reckless driving, sending a clear message that endangering public safety will not be tolerated.

Fishermen Protest in Chennai for Protected Zone

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Fishermen from ten coastal villages, spanning from Nochi-kuppam to Srinivasa Puram (Mullikuppam), staged a large-scale protest on Chennai's Marina Loop Road on April 3, 2025, demanding the establishment of a protected traditional fishing zone. The protestors, asserting their rights over the sea and its resources, called for immediate government intervention to safeguard their livelihoods from increasing threats posed by commercial interests and urban development.

A key figure in the protest, fishing community leader Kosu Mani, emphasized that the sands, the sea, and the seafloor belong solely to traditional fishermen who have relied on them for generations. The demonstrators argued that unrestricted commercial activities and encroachments were severely affecting their fishing grounds, leading to dwindling catches and financial instabili-

ty. Many fishermen voiced concerns about declining fish populations due to pollution and unregulated industrial activities along the coast.

The protest also highlighted the broader struggles faced by traditional fishing communities, including inadequate infrastructure, displacement threats, and diminishing access to the shore due to tourism and urban expansion projects. Fishermen reiterated their long-standing demand for a legally recognized fishing zone that would ensure exclusive access to their traditional fishing areas, allowing them to sustain their livelihoods without external interference.

The rally, which saw a significant turnout of fishermen and community leaders, called upon the government to enact policies that prioritize the interests of small-scale fishers and protect their rights against large-scale commercial ex-



ploitation. Protestors warned that if their demands were not met, they would intensify their agitation in the coming weeks. The demonstration disrupted traffic on Marina Loop Road for several hours, drawing attention to the urgent need for a resolution.

Authorities have yet to issue an official response, but representatives from the fisheries department are expected to hold discussions with the protesting fishermen in the coming days. As tensions persist, the fishing community remains firm in its demand for a legally protected traditional fishing zone to secure their future in an increasingly challenging environment.

IMD Warns of Heavy Rains in Kerala

TPN Correspondent | Kerala

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for five districts in Kerala—Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Kottayam, and Idukki—on April 4, warning of heavy rainfall in isolated areas. According to the IMD's weather bulletin on April 3, moist-laden winds from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are intensifying summer rains across the state. An upper-air cyclonic circulation over the southeast Arabian Sea and its neighboring regions is contributing to the increased rainfall activity. Additionally, a trough extending from this circulation to south Kerala is expected to sustain the wet conditions, with heavy rain likely to continue in isolated places until April 6.

Authorities have urged residents in affected areas to remain vigilant, especially in regions prone to waterlogging, landslides, and flash floods. The Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA) has advised local administra-



tions to take necessary precautions and be prepared for emergency situations. Fishermen have also been warned to exercise caution while venturing into the sea, as weather conditions may turn hazardous. Though the summer rains bring much-needed relief from rising temperatures, they also pose challenges such as traffic congestion, power outages, and potential damage to crops. Farmers, particularly those growing rubber and paddy, are closely monitoring the rainfall pattern to assess its impact on agricultural activities.

Intermittent heavy showers accompanied by strong winds have already been reported in various parts of the state, leading to minor disruptions in daily life.

With the monsoon season still months away, meteorologists are closely observing these pre-monsoon showers to understand their implications for Kerala's overall climate. The authorities continue to issue regular updates to ensure public safety and minimize potential disruptions as the state prepares for the expected downpours.

Pawan Kalyan: The Consensus Builder India Needs

The Indian political landscape is vibrant and ever-evolving. Like the stock market, each political cycle introduces both critical and trivial issues that dominate national discourse. Two recent topics that have become national issues and have also created sharp regional and political divides are Delimitation and the National Education Policy. With Bihar, Kerala, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu state assembly elections fast approaching, these topics continue to stir up the centre-state federalism debate and provoke regional sentiments. At this critical juncture, Pawan Kalyan emerges as a unique political leader who can become a troubleshooter and a consensus builder between BJP and non-BJP parties, as well as bridge the North – South divide on these contentious topics.

Regional Sensitivity and National Vision

Pawan Kalyan's role has been instrumental in bringing the NDA government to power at both the state level in Andhra Pradesh and at the national level; he brought the TDP-BJP unity back into the fold during the 2024 elections. With JanaSena's 100% striking rate electoral success, Pawan Kalyan has positioned himself as the leader of a state party with national relevance. The mass appeal of Pawan Kalyan transcends the Telugu States and extends to other southern states, including Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, not to mention the crowds he attracted during the Maharashtra Assembly elections. Unlike most regional parties and leaders, Pawan Kalyan has the ability to engage with national parties, particularly BJP, without losing his regional identity. This dual approach makes him an ideal candidate to mediate and dialogue on sensitive national issues that require both regional sensitivity and national vision.

Delimitation: The North – South Debate

The topic of Delimitation is set to become a campaign tool, a political debate, an ideological rivalry, and a potential game changer for the future of Indian politics. The Southern States feel that delimitation based solely on population figures would unfairly penalize states that have successfully implemented population control measures, thereby undermining the principles of federalism. Another issue raised by the Southern States is that the Delimitation exercise might result in a reduction of their Lok Sabha seats, while states in North India, especially Uttar Pradesh, will see an increase in their Lok Sabha seats, giving them more political power.

The Ideal Mediator: Trouble Shooting the BJP and Non-BJP Differences

Pawan Kalyan connects well



with both BJP and regional parties. While he is currently part of the NDA, including TDP, he enjoys goodwill among the leaders of the southern states, including KTR from the BRS and the Left Parties; he recently met the CM of Karnataka, Siddaramaiah; he is well received both in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka; he campaigned for Shiv Sena –NCP-backed candidates in recently held Maharashtra Assembly Elections and is approachable to the BSP in Uttar Pradesh.

Pawan Kalyan was born, brought up, and educated across various regions in the South. He speaks Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Hindi, English and, to an extent, Marathi. He is quite familiar with the nuances and details of the regions of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu. Pawan Kalyan understands the deep-rooted concerns of the Southern States regarding the representation, federalism and revenue contribution disparities. Pawan Kalyan offers a balanced approach, combining southern perspectives with national interests, paving the way for potential negotiations on a fair formula. Alternatives from increased Rajya Sabha seats for the Southern States or a weighted representation, a middle ground can be achieved. With his ability to engage both the BJP and non-BJP parties, he can serve as a neutral voice capable of brokering a fair solution.

NEP—Balancing the Regional and Ideological Divide

The National Education Policy has been received with mixed opinion, with the BJP-governed states pushing for the 3-language policy, while the non-BJP states, es-



POGARTHI NAGESWARARAO
Sr Journalist, Political Analyst
9381243599

pecially in the South, have raised concerns about Hindi imposition and centralization versus federalism in the education policy. Historically, Dravida political parties have strongly opposed the Hindi language imposition and contested the centre, be it Congress in the past or BJP at present.

Why Pawan Kalyan Can Lead the NEP Dialogue

Pawan Kalyan has been a strong proponent of addressing regional aspirations without compromising national integrity and sovereignty. He has been vocal about the importance of Telugu and regional languages in education and governance, making him a credible voice in the South. He was the earliest to give a call for the skill census and strongly advocated for skill-based education in the national education policy, which was publicly acknowledged by then Minister of Education Shri Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal. Pawan Kalyan's focus on vocational training and skill development aligns with the goals of the NEP, allowing him to serve

as a bridge between the supporters and critics of the NEP. Pawan Kalyan brings in the possibility to facilitate a discussion for a customized state-level implementation of the NEP without losing its essence while respecting the regional linguistic identities.

The need for a new consensus builder of the nation

Mediation and consensus building have played a key role for India since its struggle for independence. In the modern Indian polity, PV Narasimha Rao successfully stitched a coalition to steer India through economic reforms in the early 1990s, Atal Behari Vajpayee led a coalition in the late 90s, and Pranab Mukherjee was the Congress party's go-to person for troubleshooting. However, the present-day political atmosphere in India lacks a strong consensus builder who can navigate through BJP's national agenda and regional aspirations. Pawan Kalyan has a rare ability to make his policy opposition clear, when necessary, yet remain amicable enough to forge alliances with political opponents to get things done or achieve the goals. Pawan Kalyan can become the face of the new consensus builder of the nation—he is not entirely dependent on BJP like some allies, which allows him to speak independently; in the past, he had differences with BJP and TDP about the special status issues of Andhra Pradesh; he opposed playing the national anthem in the cinema halls, opposed the imposition of any language, and opposed the idea of privatizing the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, etc. Last but not least, Pawan Kalyan commands a massive appeal among the youth, giving him a moral authority to speak on policies related to the future of the youth, including education.

Conclusion—A National Role Beckons

Pawan Kalyan is already an established leader in Andhra Pradesh. His ability to connect across ideological and regional divides, engage the national and regional parties, and bridge the North-South divide makes him a potential national leader. Pawan Kalyan can carve a significant space in national politics as a leader who can foster dialogue, forge alliances across ideologies, harmonize regional aspirations & national unity, and build consensus in an increasingly fragmented polity. As 2026 Delimitation approaches with major political challenges, India will need leaders who can mediate rather than polarize, ensure calm over chaos—and Pawan Kalyan has all the ingredients to emerge as India's much-needed political troubleshooter and become the new consensus builder of the nation.



PM Modi's Thailand Visit: Can India Change The Regional Game With BIMSTEC?

The 6th BIMSTEC Summit, taking place in Bangkok, Thailand, promises to be a critical moment for regional cooperation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will meet key leaders from the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), but the timing could prove challenging. Myanmar is grappling with internal conflict, Thailand has recently faced a devastating earthquake, and tensions between India and Bangladesh may overshadow the summit's potential outcomes.

BIMSTEC, established in 1997, includes seven member states: Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Thailand. The bloc represents 1.73 billion people and a combined GDP of \$5.2 trillion. Initially focused on Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, Myanmar joined in 1997, followed by Nepal and Bhutan in 2004. The bloc aims to enhance cooperation across various sectors, such as trade, energy, transport, and counterterrorism.

One of the summit's key developments will be the Maritime Transport Cooperation Agreement, which is set to improve trade and travel across the Bay of Bengal. Additional Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Indian Ocean Rim Association and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) will further solidify regional ties and security.

BIMSTEC aspires to emulate the success of ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Like Europe with the EU and Africa with the African Union, regional cooperation remains a significant goal for BIMSTEC nations. Historically, the Bay of Bengal served as a thriving hub of trade, and BIMSTEC has the potential to revive these connections. However, unlike SAARC, BIMSTEC offers a unique bridge between South Asia and Southeast Asia, particularly aligned with India's "Neighbourhood First" and "Act East" policies.

India, the largest member of BIMSTEC, plays a central role in driving regional prosperity and covers much of the bloc's operational expenses. While BIMSTEC offers exciting opportunities, it has struggled to make substantial progress, with in-person meetings and breakthroughs being infrequent. Trade agreements, including the long-delayed free trade agreement, remain elusive. However, regional connectivity projects like the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP) are helping improve infrastructure, although challenges like Myanmar's ongoing civil unrest have hindered their full realization.

Furthermore, India is advocating for a preferential trade agreement within BIMSTEC, a potential stepping stone toward a comprehensive free trade agreement. Security and energy cooperation are also gaining momentum, as evidenced by MoUs on grid interconnections and India's involvement in BIMSTEC's energy center in Bengaluru. These efforts aim to enhance cooperation in energy-rich nations like Bhutan, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

The summit comes with a significant diplomatic challenge—Bangladesh's strained ties with India. Bangladesh's interim government, led by Muhammad Yunus, has cultivated closer relations with China, which has caused tensions with India. Yunus' recent comments about Bangladesh's strategic role and its relationship with China have further strained relations, leading many to speculate that PM Modi's meeting with Yunus might only be a brief exchange of pleasantries.

Trump Just Changed The Very Meaning Of Tariffs

A New Era of Protectionism

President Donald Trump marked a significant moment in trade history by declaring it "Liberation Day," a day when American industry was reborn. This bold announcement introduced a series of reciprocal tariffs aimed at addressing what he described as unfair trade practices from both friendly and adversarial nations. As markets reacted to this shift, Asia's stock markets tumbled, and gold prices soared. Trump's renewed focus on tariffs is poised to reshape the global trade landscape, significantly altering relationships between nations.

For countries like India, the conse-

quences of these new tariffs could be severe. The US's 26% tariff on Indian exports, along with a 25% baseline tariff on automobiles, threatens to disrupt various industries. India's electronics, pharmaceuticals, and gems and jewelry sectors are especially vulnerable. With Indian pharmaceuticals making up a substantial portion of the US market for generic drugs, this move could lead to significant price hikes, damaging the competitiveness of Indian exports. Sectors like textiles and jewelry, which have historically thrived due to lower production costs, are also at risk, with India losing its edge to cheaper competitors like Viet-

nam and China. In total, India's economy could face a \$31 billion blow, with the broader global supply chain suffering as well.

Although Trump's tariff policies are often viewed as extreme, they aren't entirely unprecedented. Former President Joe Biden, while pursuing his own protectionist measures, maintained many of Trump's tariffs, especially on China. Biden's industrial policies aimed at bolstering domestic manufacturing helped fuel a boom in factory investment by 2023. Critics of Trump's tariffs argue they disproportionately burden consumers, raising

prices on goods, while American businesses struggled with supply chain disruptions. The economic fallout from these tariffs was seen in sectors like agriculture, where US farmers suffered due to retaliatory tariffs from China. Yet, despite these challenges, Trump's approach of viewing trade as a zero-sum game continued to resonate with many of his supporters.

Trump's methods contrast with those of previous administrations, which focused on multilateral trade agreements. For instance, Obama's Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) sought to balance economic power in the



Asia-Pacific region, but opposition from both sides of the political spectrum led to its collapse. In contrast, Trump and Biden shifted the focus to bilateral agreements and strategic decoupling, highlighting a fundamental shift in US trade policy. Biden's "friend-shoring" approach further emphasized alliances with trusted partners rather than adversaries like China.

India Evaluates Impact of Trump's Reciprocal Tariffs

India is carefully assessing the impact of the reciprocal tariffs imposed by the Donald Trump administration, which include additional ad-valorem duties ranging from 10% to 50% on imports from all trading partners. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry stated on Thursday, April 3, 2025, that it is engaging with key stakeholders, including Indian industries and exporters, to gather feedback and evaluate the situation.

The government's response comes in light of the Trump administration's recent trade policy shift, which includes a 27% tariff on certain imports. While acknowledging the potential challenges posed by these new trade measures, India is also exploring opportunities that may emerge from the policy change. The Ministry emphasized that its approach aligns with the vision of *Viksit Bharat*, which aims for a developed and self-reliant India. "We are carefully examining the implications of the various measures and announcements made by the President of the USA," ANI quoted the ministry as saying. The statement further highlighted that the government is proactively assessing strategies to mitigate any adverse effects while identifying potential trade advantages. The US administration's executive order on reciprocal tariffs marks a significant shift in global trade dynamics, impacting multiple countries, including India. As one of the largest trading partners of the US, India is



expected to adopt a balanced approach, focusing on both safeguarding its exports and leveraging new trade opportunities. Industry experts believe that while higher tariffs on Indian exports to the US could pose short-term challenges, they may also open doors for diversification of trade markets and strengthening domestic manufacturing. The government's engagement with exporters and industry leaders aims to de-

velop a comprehensive strategy to navigate these evolving trade conditions. As global trade tensions continue to unfold, India's response to these tariffs will be crucial in determining its economic resilience and long-term trade strategies. Further discussions between Indian and US trade representatives are anticipated in the coming weeks to address the implications of the new tariff policies.

Jaishankar Stresses Terrorism and Trafficking at BIMSTEC Meet

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar emphasized the urgent need to tackle terrorism, human trafficking, and illicit narcotics trade during the 20th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on April 3, 2025. Addressing his counterparts, he called for a more ambitious approach to regional cooperation in light of increasing global instability. Jaishankar highlighted the importance of addressing real-world challenges such as cybersecurity, counter-terrorism, and organized crime through robust policy frameworks. "We need to create the necessary frameworks to deal with them effectively," he stated, stressing that BIMSTEC nations must work collectively to confront these threats.

Reflecting on the changing global order, Jaishankar noted that the dominance of a few powerful nations in shaping international policies is a thing of the past. He asserted that developing nations must collaborate to navigate contemporary geopolitical challenges. "The era when a few powers underwrote the international system is now behind us. What we make of our prospects is very much dependent on ourselves," he remarked, underscoring the importance of regional partnerships. Jaishankar also pointed out that the Bay of Bengal region shares common interests and concerns that must be addressed col-



lectively. He acknowledged that historical factors had previously hindered regional development but urged BIMSTEC nations to leverage their shared past and modern technological advancements to boost connectivity, trade, and investment. Despite BIMSTEC's potential, Jaishankar admitted that the region's economic performance remains below expectations. "Whether it is connectivity, trade, investment, or services between BIMSTEC members, we are performing below our real potential," he said. He urged nations to har-

ness both traditional strengths and emerging technologies to overcome obstacles and drive economic growth. As BIMSTEC marks its 28th year, Jaishankar reaffirmed India's commitment to strengthening regional cooperation and ensuring that the organization plays a vital role in shaping a secure and prosperous future for its member states. The meeting concluded with discussions on enhancing trade relations, security cooperation, and economic integration among BIMSTEC countries.

Dy CM Shinde to Vet Files Before CM Fadnavis



In a significant political move, the Maharashtra government has mandated that all official files must now be vetted by Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde before being forwarded to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for approval. The directive was issued by Chief Secretary Sujata Saunik on March 18, marking a shift in administrative protocol. This decision appears to be a strategic

effort to maintain political balance between the two leaders, reviving a system previously in place during 2023 when files were first cleared by the then two Deputy Chief Ministers—Ajit Pawar and Devendra Fadnavis—before reaching the Chief Minister, Eknath Shinde. The arrangement was originally introduced after Ajit Pawar, formerly the Leader of Opposition, joined the Shinde-led

government on July 2, 2023, along with several Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MLAs. The latest directive aligns with the earlier framework, wherein Deputy CM Pawar, who held the finance portfolio, processed files before sending them to Fadnavis, who oversaw the home, law, and judiciary departments, before the documents reached CM Shinde for final approval. By reinstating a similar procedure, the government aims to ensure smoother administrative functioning while maintaining equilibrium among the state's key political players. The move has sparked political discussions, with some viewing it as an attempt to strengthen Shinde's role in governance, while others see it as a power-balancing act between the CM and his deputy. The directive could influence decision-making speed and coordination within the government, particularly in crucial sectors such as finance, law, and infrastructure. As Maharashtra navigates political complexities ahead of the upcoming elections, this administrative restructuring is likely to shape the state's governance dynamics in the months to come.



Vijay Slams Waqf Bill, Demands Withdrawal

Actor and Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief Vijay has strongly criticized the Waqf (Amendment) Bill passed in the Lok Sabha, calling it "anti-democratic" and demanding its immediate withdrawal. In a sharp statement on Thursday, Vijay accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led central government of engaging in "anti-Muslim politics" and warned that if the bill was not repealed, his party would stand in solidarity with the Muslim community in their legal struggle to protect Waqf rights. His remarks come amid growing opposition from various political groups and Muslim organizations, including the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), which have also pledged to challenge the bill through legal means.

The controversial bill has sparked widespread criticism, with opponents arguing that it undermines the autonomy of Waqf boards and restricts the management of Waqf properties, which are meant for religious and charitable purposes in the Muslim community. Critics claim that the amendments interfere with community rights and are part of a broader pattern of policies targeting minority institutions. The BJP government, however, has defended the bill, asserting that it aims to streamline Waqf management and ensure transparency in land administration. Despite these assurances, protests have erupted in various parts of the country, with Muslim organizations and opposition parties viewing the bill as an infringement on religious freedoms. Vijay's intervention in the matter adds political significance, especially as TVK continues to expand its influence in Tamil Nadu's political landscape. His vocal stance aligns with his broader efforts to position himself as a leader who advocates for social justice and minority rights. Given his massive fan following and emerging political clout, his statement is expected to add momentum to the ongoing resistance against the bill. As protests intensify, legal challenges are also likely to follow, potentially escalating the controversy further. With tensions rising, the demand for a rollback of the bill is gaining traction, setting the stage for a prolonged political and legal battle over Waqf rights in India.

How BJP Secured TDP, JD(U) Support for Waqf Bill

The decision of traditionally secular parties like the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal United (JD(U)) to back the contentious Waqf Amendment Bill has raised questions, given their historical divergence from the BJP on issues concerning Muslims. However, behind-the-scenes negotiations and strategic assurances from the BJP played a key role in bringing these allies on board. Both parties, which rely heavily on Muslim support, have previously opposed BJP-backed policies such as the Uniform Civil Code. However, sources indicate that senior BJP ministers engaged in extensive discussions

with TDP and JD(U) leaders before the bill's introduction, convincing them of its importance. Apart from these two parties, BJP also reached out to coalition partners like Chirag Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party and Jayant Chaudhary's Rashtriya Lok Dal, explaining that the bill aimed to safeguard Muslim interests and ensure women's rights rather than create religious divisions, as the opposition had claimed. While the allies broadly agreed, they expressed concerns about certain provisions, especially those affecting existing Waqf properties and potential encroachments on state governments' rights.

To address these concerns, the bill was sent to a Joint Parliamentary Committee, which recommended 14 amendments, including significant inputs from JD(U) and TDP. JD(U) pushed for ensuring the law would not apply retrospectively, preventing interference with existing mosques and religious sites. They also insisted that states must be consulted before making decisions on Waqf land, emphasizing that land remains a state subject. Meanwhile, TDP advocated for greater autonomy for state governments and proposed appointing senior officials above the collector level to handle disputes. They also sought an extended timeline for uploading Waqf-related documents on official portals to facilitate better compliance.

These modifications helped the BJP secure the backing of its allies, ensuring smoother passage of the bill in Parliament. While the move has sparked political debates, it also underscores the BJP's efforts to consolidate its coalition and navigate opposition from minority groups while pushing forward its legislative agenda.





PM Modi holds talks with Thai counterpart Shinawatra ahead of BIMSTEC summit

TPN Correspondent | Bangkok

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Bangkok on Thursday, April 3, 2025, for a two-day visit to attend the 6th BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) summit. During his visit, PM Modi held delegation-level talks with his Thai counterpart, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, to strengthen bilateral ties and discuss key issues of mutual interest.

The discussions between the two leaders are expected to focus on enhancing cooperation in areas such as trade, security, tourism, and cultural exchange, building on the long-standing relationship between India and Thailand. Both nations share a commitment to regional stability and development, and their collaboration within the BIMSTEC framework is vital for fostering greater economic and technological integration in the Bay of Bengal region.

Before the talks, PM Modi was given a Guard of Honour, marking the official beginning of his visit. Following this, the Prime Minister had the opportunity to witness a captivating Ramakien performance — the Thai version of the ancient Ramayana epic. The performance was a spectacular display of Thai cultural heritage, symbolizing the deep historical and cultural ties that bind India and Thailand. PM Modi's visit to Bangkok holds significant importance in strengthening India's engagement with South-east Asia, particularly through multilateral forums like BIMSTEC. The summit, which brings together countries from the Bay of Bengal region, provides a platform to address pressing regional challenges and foster collaboration in areas ranging from connectivity to climate change. As India continues to deepen its strategic and economic partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region, Prime Minister Modi's engagement with Thailand and other BIMSTEC members will play a key role in shaping future regional dynamics. The talks with Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra are expected to pave the way for enhanced cooperation and a closer India-Thailand relationship moving forward.

Donald Trump Unveils Reciprocal Tariffs On Countries, Escalates Trade Tensions

- **Trump imposes sweeping tariffs, with some as high as 50%, targeting key global trade partners.**
- **China faces a 34% tariff, while the EU, India, and Japan see significant trade restrictions.**
- **Additional 25% duties on automobiles escalate tensions with Europe and Asia.**

TPN Correspondent | Washington

In a bold move reflecting his "America First" agenda, US President Donald Trump on Wednesday unveiled a broad set of tariffs aimed at various nations across the globe. These tariffs, some as high as 49 percent, are part of Trump's ongoing efforts to reshape US trade policies and restore what he claims has been the country's exploitation by both friendly and adversarial nations for decades.

Speaking from the White House Rose Garden, Trump expressed frustration over what he described as the historic mistreatment of the United States by its trading partners. He stated, "For decades, our country has been looted, pilaged, raped, and plundered by nations near and far, both friend and foe alike." The president's tone was combative as he highlighted the tariffs as a necessary step to reclaim the country's economic prosperity. Trump's most severe levies were directed at key global players, including a 34 percent tariff on imports from China, 26 percent on India, 24 percent on Japan, and 20 percent on the European Union. These moves are expected to have a significant impact on global trade flows.

The tariffs, which span a wide range of goods, are seen as a direct challenge to the existing global trading system. Trump defended the measures, claiming that the tariffs would help American industry recover and bring back manufacturing jobs that he argues were outsourced to other countries. "This is Liberation Day," Trump declared, calling the day a historic moment when America would "reclaim its destiny." He further framed the tariffs as



part of a broader effort to restore American economic strength, saying that it would "forever be remembered as the day American industry was reborn."

Alongside these new tariffs, Trump also announced the imposition of additional 25 percent duties on automobiles, a move that further complicates relations with key allies, especially in Europe and Asia. The new tariffs target numerous countries, including some of the US's largest trade partners, and have the potential to spark retaliation and trade wars, disrupting global supply chains. The sweeping changes threaten to upend existing trade agreements and could lead to significant price hikes for consumers in the US.

The tariffs cover a wide variety of products, ranging from elec-

tronics and agricultural products to machinery and raw materials. Countries like Vietnam, Taiwan, South Korea, and Thailand are among those facing heavy tariffs, with Vietnam seeing a staggering 46 percent rate. Other nations, such as Cambodia and Lesotho, have tariffs as high as 49 and 50 percent, respectively. The new tariffs also extend to nations from every corner of the globe, including emerging economies like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nigeria, as well as long-standing US allies like the United Kingdom and Israel, both of which will face tariffs of 10 percent.

In total, the tariffs will affect a broad spectrum of global trade, signaling a potential shift in US trade relations that could have long-lasting effects on the global economy. Economists and trade

experts have warned that these tariffs could have unintended consequences, including higher consumer prices in the US, disruptions in supply chains, and retaliatory tariffs from other countries. Trump's unilateral approach to international trade has raised concerns about escalating tensions, particularly with China, which could result in a prolonged trade war.

Trump's announcement came just days after the implementation of auto tariffs and follows a series of contentious trade negotiations with major global economies. As the situation develops, the full impact of these new tariffs remains to be seen, but it is clear that Trump's economic policies will continue to shape US foreign relations and global trade dynamics in the years to come.

China Opposes US Tariffs, Vows Countermeasures in Escalating Trade Dispute



TPN Correspondent | Beijing

China has strongly condemned the latest round of tariffs imposed by the United States, vowing to take "countermeasures" to protect its rights and interests. The Chinese government's reaction came after US President Donald Trump implemented a series of new levies on imports, including a 10 percent tariff on global goods and an additional 34 percent tariff specifically targeting China.

The Commerce Ministry in Beijing issued a statement expressing firm opposition to the tariffs, which it described as violations of international trade rules. It argued that the measures would seriously harm the rights and interests of affected countries, warning that they would have far-reaching consequences for global economic development. The ministry also accused the US of engaging

in "unilateral bullying" and called for the immediate cancellation of the tariffs.

In retaliation, China has imposed its own tariffs on US agricultural products, including soybeans, pork, and chicken, with rates as high as 15 percent. These moves are part of a broader trade dispute that has the potential to damage both economies. China's fragile economic recovery, already hindered by a debt crisis in the property sector and low consumer spending, now faces further pressure from these new tariffs.

Trump has defended the tariffs, labeling them "reciprocal" in nature. However, experts have criticized his administration's claim that other countries' tariffs on US goods are far more damaging than they actually are. China, in its statement, rejected the idea of reciprocity and emphasized that the US had long benefited from international trade, urging Washington to pursue dialogue to resolve the dispute.

The Chinese government stressed that there are no winners in a trade war, reiterating that protectionism is not a viable solution. It pointed out that raising tariffs has never effectively resolved the US's own economic challenges, and warned that the global economy will suffer as a result.

In addition to these new levies, the US also imposed a 25 percent tariff on steel and aluminum imports, a sector in which China is the world leader in production, though it is not a major exporter of steel to the United States.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu Arrives in Hungary Amid ICC Arrest Warrant

TPN Correspondent | Washington

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu arrived in Hungary's capital early Thursday (April 3, 2025), receiving a warm red carpet welcome despite facing a warrant for his arrest issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC). This marks only the second foreign trip Netanyahu has made since the ICC issued the arrest warrant in November 2024.

The arrest warrant was issued for Netanyahu in connection with alleged war crimes linked to Israeli military operations in Palestinian territories. The ICC's decision has drawn significant international attention, with calls for accountability growing as political leaders and human rights organizations highlight the severity of the allegations.

Netanyahu's visit to Hungary comes as part of ongoing diplomatic engagements, but his presence in Hungary has drawn controversy. Hungary, led by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, has historically been a strong supporter of Israel and has maintained close political ties with Netanyahu's government.



Orbán's government has rejected the ICC's jurisdiction and criticized its decision, underscoring Hungary's staunch support for Israel amidst the international legal challenges faced by Netanyahu.

Despite the ICC warrant, Netanyahu continues to assert that the charges against him are politically motivated and part of a broader international campaign against Israel. His visit to Hungary highlights the political dynamics at play, as Hungary's government has repeatedly expressed opposition to the ICC's activities, particularly when it

comes to issues concerning Israel's security and military operations.

As Netanyahu navigates the legal and diplomatic challenges posed by the ICC, his travels are expected to remain under scrutiny, with the international community closely watching any potential consequences or actions resulting from the arrest warrant. The Prime Minister's visit to Hungary highlights the complex intersection of international law, geopolitics, and diplomacy that continues to shape the global response to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Markets End Lower Amid Tariff Concerns; IT Sector Hit Hard.



Domestic stock markets suffered a moderate loss. Benchmark indices started in a gap-down on Thursday after US President Donald Trump announced tariffs. Investors started selling after global markets crashed suddenly and negative signals came from Asian markets. They started buying again after it was known that the impact of tariffs would be minimal and pharma companies were excluded. After that, the markets, which had covered some losses, continued to be range-bound until the end. The Nifty IT index bled. It fell by 4.5%. Pharma, healthcare and bank indices were hit. Overall, the Nifty ended 82 points lower and the Sensex 322 points lower.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 76,617 in the previous session, opened at 75,811 on Thursday. It touched an intraday low of 75,807. It reached an intraday high of 76,493. It ended at 76,295, down 322 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 23,150, touched a low of 23,145 and a high of 23,306. It closed at 23,250, down 82 points. The Nifty Bank rose 294 points to settle at 51,597.

In the Nifty50, 22 companies gained while 26 lost. Power Grid, Sun Pharma, Ultratech Sem, Cipla, Shriram Finance were the top gainers. TCS, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Infi, ONGC were the biggest losers. Pharma, healthcare, PSU bank, CPSE, media, PSE, bank, private bank, consumption and energy sector indices rose. IT, auto, metals, oil, finance and realty indices fell.

Market breadth on NSE turned in favour of buyers. Out of a total of 2963 shares traded, 2057 gained and 829 lost. Shares of 37 companies touched 52-week highs and 24 shares touched 52-week lows. 287 shares touched the upper circuit and 25 shares touched the lower circuit.

The rupee strengthened by 7 paise against the dollar to settle at 85.44. Ipca Laboratories shares gained the most in 13 months today. Ola Electric announced that it will deliver vehicles on the same day of registration. 14 lakh shares changed hands in BHEL. Jindal Steel acquired Allied Stripes. IDFC Bank shares rose to a ten-month high today. Bank of India's deposit growth was 10.6% in FY25, loan growth was 13.6%. Crude oil prices fell by 3% today. Dhanalakshmi Bank's Q4 deposits grew by 12% to Rs 16,013 crore. Bank of Baroda's deposits grew by 9.3% to Rs 12.42 lakh crore. 11 lakh shares changed hands in Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services. Some experts have estimated that India's GDP may decline by 50 basis points with the 26% tariffs implemented by Trump. Reliance Industries will build a biogas plant in Andhra Pradesh.

UltraTech Cement Ltd.
UltraTech Cement, India's largest cement manufacturer, has been experiencing steady demand, driven by infrastructure projects and real estate recovery. The company recently announced capacity

expansions and strategic acquisitions to strengthen its market dominance. Despite fluctuating raw material costs, UltraTech has managed to maintain profitability through operational efficiencies and cost optimizations. The stock has been relatively stable, with minor corrections due to overall market sentiment. Analysts continue to maintain a positive outlook, given the increasing cement demand across urban and rural regions.



Adani Power Ltd.
Adani Power has been at the forefront of India's energy sector, benefiting from rising electricity demand and increased coal availability. The company has secured long-term power purchase agreements (PPAs) that provide revenue stability. Recent expansion plans, including new thermal and renewable energy projects, are expected to boost future earnings.



The stock has seen strong momentum, supported by favorable government policies and sectoral tailwinds. However, investors remain cautious about regulatory risks and fluctuations in fuel costs. Overall, Adani Power is well-positioned for long-term growth, especially as India accelerates its energy transition.

Punjab National Bank (PNB)
PNB, one of India's leading public sector banks, has been focusing on improving asset quality and expanding its loan book. The bank recently reported a decline in non-performing assets (NPAs), reflecting improved credit discipline. Additionally, PNB's digital banking initiatives and expansion into retail lending have been driving business growth.



However, the stock has faced volatility due to concerns over interest rate fluctuations and sectoral challenges. Analysts maintain a neutral-to-positive outlook, citing improving fundamentals and government support for PSU banks.

Adani Enterprises Ltd.
Adani Enterprises, the flagship company of the Adani Group, continues to expand aggressively across multiple sectors, including infrastructure, airports, green energy, and mining. The company has been making strategic investments in data centers, hydrogen projects, and logistics, positioning itself as a diversified business conglomerate.



Despite market fluctuations, Adani Enterprises has maintained investor confidence with its long-term vision and high-growth business segments. The stock has been volatile but remains a key watch for long-term investors, especially given its expansion into emerging industries.

Rupee Closes Stronger Against Dollar After Trump Tariffs

The Indian rupee closed stronger against the US dollar on Thursday, recovering from early losses triggered by the latest tariff announcement from US President Donald Trump. The currency strengthened by 7 paise to settle at 85.44 per dollar, bouncing back after opening at 85.75—its sharpest opening drop since March 10. On Wednesday, the rupee had closed at 85.51 per dollar. Trump's decision to impose steep reciprocal tariffs on major trading partners, including China and the European Union, initially rattled markets. However, investor sentiment stabilized later in the day, helping the rupee erase its early losses. Brent crude prices also declined, falling 3.2% to \$72.52 per barrel amid a broader market sell-off. The drop in oil prices provided

some relief for import-dependent economies like India, as energy products, including oil and natural gas, were exempted from the new US tariffs. "There is considerable uncertainty around implementation and how other countries will retaliate," said Abhishek Goenka, Founder & CEO of India Forex & Asset Management. The US has introduced significantly higher reciprocal tariffs than expected, imposing a minimum 10% duty on all imports while introducing additional levies on 60 countries. For India, the Trump administration has determined that tariffs, factoring in currency manipulation and trade barriers, should be as high as 52%, according to Goenka. The first phase of these tariffs, a baseline 10% duty, will take effect



on April 5, while the higher tariffs targeting India, China, and the EU will come into force from April 9. Addressing an event titled 'Liberation Day' at the White House, Trump defended the move, stating that the tariffs were necessary to counter "unfair trade policies" that have weakened US manufacturers and disrupted supply chains. He described the new levies as his strongest action yet against what he called an "imbalanced" global trade system.

NCLT rejects insolvency plea against Zomato over Payment Dispute

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Delhi on Thursday dismissed an insolvency plea filed against food delivery giant Zomato by uniform supplier Nona Lifestyle over an alleged payment default of ₹1.64 crore. The tribunal rejected the plea on procedural grounds, stating that Nona Lifestyle had failed to comply with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). It ruled that the company had not properly served the mandatory notice under Section 8 of the IBC before filing the case. The original plea was previously dismissed in November 2024 after Nona Lifestyle's lawyer failed to appear for the hearing. When the company later sought to restore the case, the tribunal denied the request, stating that an invalid plea could not be revived. Nona Lifestyle, a business-to-business apparel manufacturer, had sought to initiate a Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) against Zomato, alleging non-payment for uniforms and merchandise, including ICC World Cup 2023 apparel. According to the company, Zomato placed multiple orders in 2023 for rider uniforms, trousers, and World Cup jerseys but later delayed payments and refused deliveries, citing storage issues. The plea included details of specific purchase orders, such as an order dated July 18, 2023, for 32,724 rider t-shirts, generat-



ing five invoices worth ₹16.47 lakh. While Nona Lifestyle delivered 11,210 t-shirts, the remaining 21,500 were not accepted due to payment disputes, leaving the undelivered stock in the supplier's warehouse. Another order from June 6, 2023, for 35,000 t-shirts worth ₹51.45 lakh also faced delivery delays, attracting penalties under Zomato's agreement. Nona Lifestyle further alleged that Zomato pressured it into offering discounts through "threats and warnings" and later refused to accept remaining World Cup jerseys, citing a "failed campaign." Since the jerseys were custom-made, they could not be resold. Zomato denied the allegations, stating that Nona Lifestyle repeatedly missed delivery deadlines, triggering contractual penalties. It argued that the delays caused "substantial reputational and goodwill damage" and maintained that it only paid for delivered jerseys after adjusting penalties and advance payments.

Will Nike & Adidas prices rise after Trump's new tariffs?

The latest reciprocal tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump, particularly the 46% duty on Vietnam, are expected to disrupt the supply chains of major global footwear brands like Nike and Adidas. With Vietnam being a key production hub, these tariffs may lead to higher consumer prices and impact the country's \$44 billion export market. Vietnam plays a crucial role in the global footwear industry, with nearly half of Nike's shoes and 27% of Adidas products manufactured there. According to Bloomberg, Vietnam contributes over \$20 billion in annual revenue for the two brands combined. The newly imposed tariffs could force price hikes as shifting supply chains is not a viable option for performance footwear due to specialized manufacturing requirements. Nike has already projected a decline in its

gross margin this quarter due to tariffs imposed on China and Mexico. Analyst Poonam Goyal from Bloomberg Intelligence stated, "I can't see how prices to consumers don't go up." Apart from Nike and Adidas, Vietnam is also a key supplier for brands like Uniqlo, H&M, and Gap. The US remains Vietnam's largest export market, benefiting from previous trade shifts during Trump's first term. However, Trump's long-standing criticism of Vietnam's trade practices suggests further trade measures could be in store. Vietnam's appeal to global brands lies in its low labor costs, skilled workforce, and stable transport routes. However, with Trump's renewed tariff policies, the country's booming footwear and apparel industry may face significant challenges in the coming years.



Air India's legacy Boeing 777 Returns with New Look

Air India has received the first of its legacy Boeing 777-300ER aircraft after a major revamp, unveiling a fresh look with upgraded interiors. Officials stated that the remaining 12 planes in the fleet will be overhauled by the end of the year. The refurbishment of the aircraft, conducted in Singapore, took around 50 days. The delay in the refit, which was initially planned for last year, was attributed to supply chain issues. However, Air India has now undertaken a heavy refresh of its older aircraft, enhancing cabins with new seats, carpets, cushions, and entertainment systems while also fixing broken seats. Air India operates 13 legacy Boeing 777s, which are primarily used for ultra-long-haul flights exceeding 14 hours. These flights connect major destinations such as Toronto and Vancouver in Canada and Newark, New York, San Francisco, and Chicago in the US. The airline's fleet comprises 67 wide-body aircraft, including 19 B777-300ERs (6 leased

from Etihad Airways), 8 B777-200LRs (5 leased from Delta Air Lines), 7 B787-9s, 27 legacy B787-8s, and 6 A350-600s. The first legacy B787 is scheduled for a retrofit in April. On the narrow-body front, Air India operates 14 A321neos, 94 A320neos, 13 A321ceos, 4 A320ceos, and 6 A319s. As part of Air India's \$400 million retrofit initiative, the first upgraded A320neo has already resumed service, with all 27 A320neos expected to be overhauled by the third quarter of this year. Air India MD and CEO Campbell Wilson stated that all legacy wide-body aircraft are expected to be refurbished by mid-2027. He acknowledged ongoing supply challenges, including shortages of engines for narrow-body aircraft, seat supply issues, and sourcing difficulties for fuselage components. "Reality is that it is going to remain a supply-constrained market, not just for Air India or India but worldwide, for another four to five years. We are victims of the circumstances, as is every other airline," Wilson remarked.

Trump’s New Tariff Plan Sparks Debate



President Donald Trump has announced sweeping tariffs, imposing a 10% duty on all imports into the United States. Additionally, higher tariffs will apply to around 60 countries and trade blocs with significant trade deficits with the U.S. Among the hardest-hit are China and the European Union, which face tariffs of 34% and 20%, respectively. During his announcement, Trump displayed a plaque outlining the calculation method, stating that the tariffs reflect “approximately half of what they are and have been charging us.” He emphasized that

the new policy aims to counteract tariffs, non-monetary trade barriers, and other trade imbalances. The internet quickly analyzed the numbers, with many observers noting a pattern. Several netizens, including investment expert Julian Klymochko and logistics CEO Ryan Petersen, suggested that the tariff rates are derived by dividing the U.S. trade deficit with a country by the value of imports from that country. Critics argue this formula lacks economic logic. Klymochko called it the “biggest economic blunder of all time,” while others labeled it “incomprehensible.”

Despite the backlash, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro projected that the new tariffs would generate \$600 billion annually, making it the largest tax increase since World War II. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent stated that the tariffs could be adjusted through negotiations. The policy has triggered intense debate globally, with foreign leaders and economists scrambling to assess its impact. As nations calculate their retaliatory measures, the economic ramifications of Trump’s tariff strategy remain uncertain.

The Delhi Metro, often regarded as the city’s lifeline, has once again found itself in the spotlight—not for its efficiency, but for an unexpected in-transit performance. A viral video shows a man breaking into an impromptu song and dance inside a metro coach, leaving fellow passengers amused and surprised. The 33-second clip, originally posted on Reddit, captures the unidentified commuter standing near the coach door, singing and dancing as he waits for his stop. The performance caught the attention of other passengers, some of whom looked on in disbelief, while others quickly pulled out their phones to record the spectacle. The video’s caption humorously noted, “You don’t need any subscription to binge-watch in Delhi Metro.” The clip has since gained traction online, drawing laughter and lighthearted reactions from netizens. Many found it entertaining, calling it a refreshing break from the usual hustle of daily commutes. Others poked fun at the unexpected entertainment, comparing it to the growing trend of unusual metro incidents, including public fights, fashion statements, and spontaneous performances. As Delhi Metro continues to be a hub of viral moments, this latest clip adds to the list of amusing encounters commuters experience on their daily rides.



Delhi Metro Passenger’s Impromptu Dance Goes Viral

Train Passenger’s Foot-on-Tray Photo Sparks Debate



A viral photo of a woman resting her bare foot on a train’s tray table has sparked an online debate about civic sense and public etiquette. Shared on social media, the image shows the woman lying across multiple seats, with one foot on a seat and the other on the tray table. She also placed her bags on the table, leaving some questioning whether she had booked the entire row or was simply making herself comfortable. The post quickly gained traction, drawing mixed reactions. Some netizens criticized the act as disrespectful, highlighting a broader issue of poor public behavior. One user remarked, “This is why Indians are looked down upon—poor public manners and hygiene.” Others pointed out similar behavior worldwide, with one commenter sharing, “I saw a white lady do the same on a

flight from Philadelphia to Dallas.” Meanwhile, some defended the woman, arguing that long train journeys with cramped seating often make passengers uncomfortable. One user wrote, “If seats are empty, what’s wrong with sitting comfortably?” Another added, “People complain about everything without understanding the situation.” The debate also extended to social class and economic growth, with a comment stating, “Many people have gained wealth but lack etiquette. The IT industry has contributed to this.” Despite the controversy, the post has amassed over nine lakh views, proving once again how simple actions in public spaces can ignite widespread discussions on social norms.

Elon Musk Reacts to Sleep Study



A new study has drawn a strong link between poor sleep quality and an increased risk of brain shrinkage and Alzheimer’s disease. Researchers suggest that improving sleep habits could delay or even reduce the risk of cognitive decline, sparking widespread discussion about the importance of rest. The study comes at a time when hustle culture continues to glorify sleepless nights, with many high-profile entrepreneurs known for sacrificing rest to maximize productivity. One such figure is Elon Musk, who has long been associated with intense work schedules and minimal sleep. As the CEO of Tesla, SpaceX, and Neuralink, Musk has often described working late into the night, even sleeping on factory floors to meet deadlines. However, the billionaire’s response to this latest research suggests he may be rethinking—or at least acknowledging—the potential risks of his sleep habits. Reacting to the study, Musk

posted a simple but telling response on social media: “Uh oh.” His comment quickly gained traction, with many users chiming in about the long-term effects of chronic sleep deprivation. Experts emphasize that sleep plays a crucial role in brain health, memory consolidation, and overall well-being. Studies have consistently shown that inadequate sleep can accelerate cognitive decline and contribute to neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer’s. While Musk’s work ethic has inspired many, this research raises questions about the long-term impact of sleep deprivation on even the most high-performing individuals. Musk’s reaction, whether serious or in jest, highlights the growing awareness of sleep’s role in maintaining cognitive function. With science continuing to underline the necessity of quality rest, the study serves as a reminder that even the world’s busiest minds may need to prioritize sleep for long-term health.



Netflix Expands Language Options for TV Viewers

Netflix has introduced enhanced language options for television users, allowing viewers to access the full range of available subtitles and dubbing languages for any title. The update aims to make the platform’s global catalog more accessible, especially as nearly a third of its total viewership comes from non-English language content. The move comes in response to increasing demand for multilingual access, with Netflix stating that it receives thousands of language availability requests every month. Previously, TV users could only choose from a limited selection of languages, but the new update ensures

broader access across its extensive catalog. Popular international titles such as South Korea’s Squid Game, Spain’s Berlin, and Germany’s Oscar-winning All Quiet on the Western Front have drawn global audiences, thanks in part to their availability in multiple languages. Netflix currently provides subtitles in 33 languages and audio dubbing in 36 languages, though availability varies by title. With this expansion, Netflix continues to strengthen its position as a global streaming giant, catering to the diverse linguistic preferences of its subscribers worldwide.



PR Sreejesh Leads Player Development Workshop for Pro Kabaddi Stars

Mashal Sports, the organizers of the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL), successfully conducted the 'PKL Level Up' Player Development Workshop to help kabaddi players grow beyond the mat. The event featured renowned speakers, including Olympic medallist PR Sreejesh, Alpi Chaudhari from Meta India, content creator Deepak Pareek, and sports psychologist Dr. Chaitanya Sridhar. The sessions covered personal branding, media handling, and mental fitness for professional athletes. PR Sreejesh emphasized teamwork and resilience, stating, "Real growth comes from failure. The ones who persist and improve ultimately succeed." He also highlighted the importance of off-field conduct, including social media presence and personal values. Dr. Chaitanya Sridhar stressed mental preparedness for handling pressure and injuries. PKL Commissioner Anupam Goswami called such initiatives crucial for shaping the future of kabaddi and inspiring young players. The workshop marked a significant step in enhancing players' careers beyond their on-field performances.



World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025: Manish Rathore, Hitesh, Abhinash Jamwal Storm into Semifinals

Indian boxers Manish Rathore, Hitesh, and Abhinash Jamwal put on dominant performances in their quarterfinal bouts at the World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025 on Thursday, securing their spots in the semifinals. In the 65kg category, Jamwal outclassed Germany's Denis Bril with a unanimous decision. Hitesh, competing in the 70kg category, also secured a convincing win over Italy's Gabriele Guidi Rontani. Manish Rathore faced a tough challenge against Australia's Paris Olympian Yusuf Chothia in the 55kg category but showcased resilience, earning a 3:2 split decision victory. In the semifinals,

- Rathore will face Nursultan Altynbek (Kazakhstan),**
- Hitesh will take on Makan Traore,**
- Jamwal will fight Gianluigi Malanga (Italy).**

Meanwhile, Jadumani Singh Mandengbam advanced to the 50kg semifinals, while India's challenge in the 75kg, 85kg, and 90+kg categories ended.

KKR Crush SRH by 80 Runs to Bounce Back in IPL 2025



Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) stormed back to winning ways with a dominant 80-run victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) in their IPL 2025 clash at Eden Gardens on Thursday. Batting first, KKR put up an imposing total of 200/6 in their 20 overs. Venkatesh Iyer led the charge with a blistering 60 off 29 balls, while Rinku Singh's unbeaten 36 off 18 deliveries provided the finishing touch. In response, SRH suffered a disastrous start, losing wickets in quick succession. Impact substitute Vaibhav Arora rattled their top-order, leaving them reeling early in the chase. While debutant Kamindu Mendis and Heinrich Klaasen attempted to fight back, their dismissals ended any hopes of a turnaround. Klaasen managed a quick 33 off 21 balls, but SRH fell well short, getting bowled out for 120. This loss marks SRH's third consecutive defeat in the tournament, raising concerns about their form moving forward.

Kriish Tyagi Prepares for Junior Grand Slam Journey

17-year-old Kriish Tyagi, India's top-ranked junior tennis player, is gearing up for a pivotal season as he prepares to compete in Junior Grand Slams. His schedule includes tournaments in Malaysia, Thailand, and the French Open, followed by Wimbledon and the US Open. Recently, Tyagi played at the SM Krishna Memorial Open in Bengaluru but faced an early exit. Despite the loss, he remains focused, citing altitude differences and match rhythm as key challenges. Earlier, he made a strong run to the ITF M25 Ahmedabad Open semifinals, reaffirming his ability to compete at higher levels. Discussing the transition to senior circuits, Tyagi highlighted the importance of crucial points and mental composure. He also credited support from the Tennis Association, which has provided wildcards into key events. With a packed calendar ahead, the young star is optimistic about his Grand Slam ambitions and India's rising tennis talent.



Umpires, Match Officials Announced for Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 Qualifier

The ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025 Qualifier will take place in Pakistan from April 9-19, with six teams competing for two spots in the prestigious tournament. A panel of 10 umpires has been appointed, including Saleema Imtiaz, the first Pakistani woman on an ICC umpiring panel. Other notable umpires include Masudur Rahman Mukul and Shatira Jakir Jesy (Bangladesh), Sarah Dambanevana (Zimbabwe), and Donovan Koch (Australia). The match referees for the event are Ali Naqvi (Pakistan), Shandre Fritz (South Africa), and Trudy Anderson (New Zealand). ICC Senior Manager - Umpires and Referees, Sean Easey, expressed confidence in the officials, emphasizing their experience and preparation. He highlighted the tournament as a crucial step for teams on their path to the World Cup.

Diksha Dagar Returns to South Africa for Joburg Open

Indian golfer Diksha Dagar is set to compete in the Joburg Open, returning to the country where she secured her maiden Ladies European Tour (LET) title at the 2019 South African Open. She is currently fifth on the Order of Merit after a strong season, finishing runner-up at the Lalla Meryem Cup and T-11 at the New South Wales Open. Joining her in Johannesburg are fellow Indians Pranavi Urs, Avani Prashanth, and Tvesa Malik. Pranavi finished T-14 in New South Wales, while rookie Avani has been consistent, making the cut in all three starts. Tvesa, a past winner on the Sunshine Ladies Tour, looks to regain form. The Modderfontein Golf Course, known for its challenging water hazards, hosts a 132-player field, including 38 LET winners. Defending champion Chiara Tamburlini aims to retain her title in the 72-hole stroke play event, which sees a cut after 36 holes.



GD Birla Memorial Masters Badminton Tournament Set to Begin

The 31st edition of the GD Birla Memorial Masters Inter-Club Badminton Tournament will take place at Bombay Gymkhana from April 4-6 and 8-12. Recognized as the premier veteran badminton tournament, it continues to attract top veteran players from various districts. Organized by Badminton Gurukul, the event has seen significant growth, with over 20 teams and more than 150 individual entries this year. Ayaz Bilawala, Organizing Secretary, expressed his excitement about the tournament's rising stature, highlighting the veteran community's enthusiasm. Supriya Devgun, Founder & MD of Badminton Gurukul, emphasized the tournament's role in promoting badminton culture among veteran athletes, making it a marquee event in the circuit.



Balakrishna on Aditya 369: Fans Go Wild!

The trend of hosting pre-release events for re-released films is catching on, and Nandamuri Balakrishna made it even more special at the Aditya 369 re-release event. Produced by Sridevi Movies and directed by Singeetam Srinivasa Rao, Aditya 369 remains a landmark sci-fi film in Telugu cinema. Speaking at the event, Balayya reminisced about how the film was crafted

with future generations in mind. He credited the visionary storytelling and Sri Krishnadevaraya's role as the film's core, which audiences still cherish. Balakrishna also hinted at something fans have been eagerly waiting for, without giving them a chance to ask—leaving them thrilled and celebrating. With the hype building, the re-release of Aditya 369 is set to be a grand affair!



Siddhu Jonnalagadda's Jack Trailer Promises Action and Laughs

The trailer for Jack, starring Star Boy Siddhu Jonnalagadda, has finally dropped, giving fans a glimpse of an action-packed comedy directed by Bommarillu Bhaskar. Featuring Vaishnavi Chaitanya as the female lead, the film blends humor with thrilling action sequences.

The plot follows Jack, a private agency agent tasked with hunting down four terrorists. Meanwhile, Prakash Raj's character is also on the same mission, leading to a high-stakes clash. Will they work together to complete their objective? And how does Vaishnavi Chaitanya's role tie into the story?

The 3-minute, 6-second trailer showcases Siddhu's signature wit, intense action, and an engaging background score by Sricharan Pakala. Produced by BVSN Prasad, Jack has heightened anticipation ahead of its release. Stay tuned for more updates!



Nayanthara Joins Yash's Thriller Toxic Ahead of Test Release



As Test, Nayanthara's much-anticipated sports drama, gears up for its Netflix premiere on April 4, 2025, the actress has already dived into her next project. She recently joined the shoot for Toxic, an action-packed thriller starring KGF star Yash and directed by Geetu Mohandas. Spotted at the Mumbai airport, Nayanthara's role in the film remains under wraps, but insiders

hint it could be a game-changing character. The film features an ensemble cast, including Kiara Advani, Huma Qureshi, Tara Sutaria, and Akshay Oberoi. Backed by Venkat K. Narayana and Yash, Toxic is a high-budget venture, reportedly costing over Rs. 200 crore. Set for a worldwide release on March 19, 2026, in multiple languages, including English, the film promises to be a thrilling cinematic spectacle.

Vaani Kapoor Shares Glamorous Backstage Moments

Vaani Kapoor dazzled at Vivienne Westwood's debut show in India, wearing a stunning golden bodycon gown. The Khel Khel Mein actress shared a behind-the-scenes video on Instagram, offering fans a glimpse into her transformation for the event. The clip showed her make-up artists and stylists working on her look, followed by her posing for pictures and walking the red carpet. The video also captured a lighthearted moment where Vaani dealt with lipstick stains on her teeth, humorously calling herself a "vampire." She demonstrated a quick hack to remove excess lipstick, earning praise from fans. Beyond fashion, Vaani is making headlines for her upcoming film Abir Gulaal with Fawad Khan, set to release on May 9, 2025. A teaser featuring the duo in a romantic rain-soaked scene has already created buzz among fans.



Catherine Tresa's Phani Held a 5-Day Snake Audition!



Telugu actress Catherine Tresa is set to shine in Phani, a psychological thriller directed by VN Aditya. Produced by Dr. Meenakshi under O.M.G. Productions, the film marks the banner's debut. The motion poster was launched in Hyderabad by legendary director Raghavendra Rao, adding to the film's growing anticipation. VN Aditya shared that Phani started as a small project but transformed into a global film after Catherine joined. She dedicated herself to the role, even attending special workshops. One of the film's most unique aspects is its use of a real snake. To ensure the perfect reptilian co-star, the team held a five-day audition, using three cameras to evaluate different snakes before selecting a black pine. Phani promises a thrilling cinematic experience!

Jonita Gandhi's Juno Look Oozes Diva Energy!

If music had a dress code, Jonita Gandhi just redefined it! The powerhouse singer, known for Arabic Kuthu and What Jhumka?, turned heads at the Juno Awards in Vancouver—not just with her voice but with her dazzling ensemble. Styled by Manish Malhotra, Jonita wore a mesmerizing golden, blue, and pink sequined dress that flowed like a dream. The elegant hooded design added a regal touch, making her look like a high-fashion sorceress casting a musical spell. Under the stage lights, her shimmering outfit seemed to groove along with her performance. Jonita didn't just own the stage—she commanded it with diva energy. If fashion and music had a love child, it would be taking notes from her!

