

Weather
Forecast

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
t° H 33° C L 24° C	t° H 34° C L 27° C	t° H 35° C L 25° C

Karnataka Govt to Set Up Welfare Board for Gig Workers

Bill to be tabled before cabinet, ordinance route planned
5% cess on companies like Amazon, Flipkart, Ola, Uber
Rahul Gandhi supports swift implementation

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
The Karnataka government is preparing to establish a Gig Workers' Welfare Board aimed at safeguarding the welfare of workers employed by platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, Ola, and Uber. The bill, intended to implement the Gig Workers' Welfare Act, will be presented before the state cabinet and enforced through an ordinance. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Labour Minister Santhosh Lad, IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge, and Industries Minister MB Patil recently met Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi at his Delhi residence to discuss the bill's implementation. This initiative fulfills promises made during the Bharat Jodo Yatra and the elections. The welfare board will be funded through a 5% cess collected from gig companies, with additional support from the state government. According to Labour Minister Santhosh Lad, the concerns of gig platforms were addressed during discussions with Rahul Gandhi, alongside IT/BT and Industries ministers. The initiative aims to improve conditions for gig workers who have been voicing their grievances over lack of benefits and job security. A comprehensive bill covering all aspects of gig workers' welfare is currently being drafted for cabinet approval. Gig workers'



representatives, including Rakshitha Dev from Karnataka, Sheikh Salahuddin from Hyderabad, and Nikhil Dev, participated in the meeting and lauded the government's efforts. They emphasized the urgent need for better working conditions and extended their support for the welfare board. Rahul Gandhi, who had previously advocated for gig workers' rights during the Bharat Jodo Yatra, welcomed the eight-point proposal prepared by the labour department.

He emphasized the importance of swift implementation to protect gig workers' interests. The labour department has also introduced bills addressing workers' gratuity and cinema workers' rights, with positive feedback from the unorganised sector. The government's move to establish a welfare board is expected to benefit thousands of gig workers across Karnataka and potentially set a precedent for other states to follow.

Will DK Shivakumar Give Up KPCC President Post?

Siddaramaiah recommends two names for KPCC President change
DK Shivakumar hints at prioritizing party over position
Alamatti Dam height issue discussed with Union Minister

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Amid ongoing discussions regarding the change of KPCC President and the appointment of Vidhan Parishad members, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in Delhi on Thursday. Siddaramaiah reportedly suggested two names for consideration as the new KPCC President. Deputy Chief Minister and current KPCC President DK Shivakumar, when asked about his stance, remarked that the party's welfare is more important than individual positions. "I have served for five years. It is important to be good for the party," he said, adding that the party's interests should take precedence over personal ambitions.



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Rajanna Eyeing KPCC Chief Post? Minister's Son's Mysuru Tour Sparks Speculation

Rajendra visits Mysuru region, meets ST community leaders
Aspires for KPCC President post amid father's political ambitions
Lodges complaint over alleged 'supari' plot against him



TPN Correspondent | Mysuru
MLC R Rajendra, son of Cooperation Minister K N Rajanna, has stirred political curiosity with his ongoing tour of the Mysuru region, where he has been actively meeting leaders from the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community. The visit comes at a time when his father Rajanna is reportedly aspiring for the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) President post. Rajendra, a key ST leader from Tumakuru Congress, began



his Mysuru tour on Thursday by visiting the Srikanteshwara temple in Nanjangud. Since then, he has been meeting various ST leaders, accompanied by several supporters. His visit follows a controversial Assembly Session where Rajanna alleged an attempt to 'honey-trap' him, claiming knowledge of a "big man" behind the plot. Speaking to media persons in Mysuru, Rajendra confirmed filing a complaint with the Tumakuru Superintendent of Police regarding an

alleged 'supari' threat against him. When questioned about his father's ambitions to become KPCC President, he emphasized Rajanna's dedication to the party over four decades, mentioning his work with the Youth Congress. "If given a chance, he can do a commendable job. I will also support him in strengthening the Congress. But, it is up to the party high command to decide," Rajendra stated.

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BJP Workers Accuse Congress Spokesperson Thennira Mahina of Abetment

Demand Arrest of Congress Spokesperson Over Suicide Abetment Claim
Protest follows suicide of BJP worker Vinay Somaiah

TPN Correspondent | Kodagu
BJP workers staged a massive protest in Madikeri, Kodagu district, on Friday, demanding the arrest of Congress spokesperson Thennira Mahina, accusing him of involvement in the alleged suicide abetment of BJP worker Vinay Somaiah. Vinay Somaiah, a BJP worker, died by suicide, leaving behind a note alleging that Congress MLAs of Kodagu and Thennira Mahina were responsible for his death. BJP workers claim Vinay was booked by Kodagu police over a derogatory post made by another member in a WhatsApp group he administered. The complaint was reportedly filed by Thennira Mahina after the post targeted Virajpet MLA AS Ponanna. Former MLA KG Bopaiah accused the police of bypassing legal procedures by not issuing notices before registering cases. He alleged that Vinay and two others were threatened by the police under political pressure, demanding that murder charges be filed against Mahina and that lawful action be taken against the Congress MLAs.



BJP district president Ravi Kalappa stated that complaints by BJP workers are often ignored by the police and insisted that this case be treated as a murder. He demanded the resignation of the MLAs and a fair investigation. SP K Ramarajan arrived at the protest site after an hour and assured the protesters that the case is being handled by authorities in Bengaluru, with Kodagu police providing full cooperation. BJP workers have threatened to call for a district-wide bandh if their demands are not met.

CM Siddaramaiah Meets Rahul, KPCC Change & Cabinet Rejig on Hold

High command delays decision on KPCC presidency and cabinet reshuffle
Alleged honeytrap issue discussed; Rahul urges internal resolution
Two-year celebration planned across four divisions

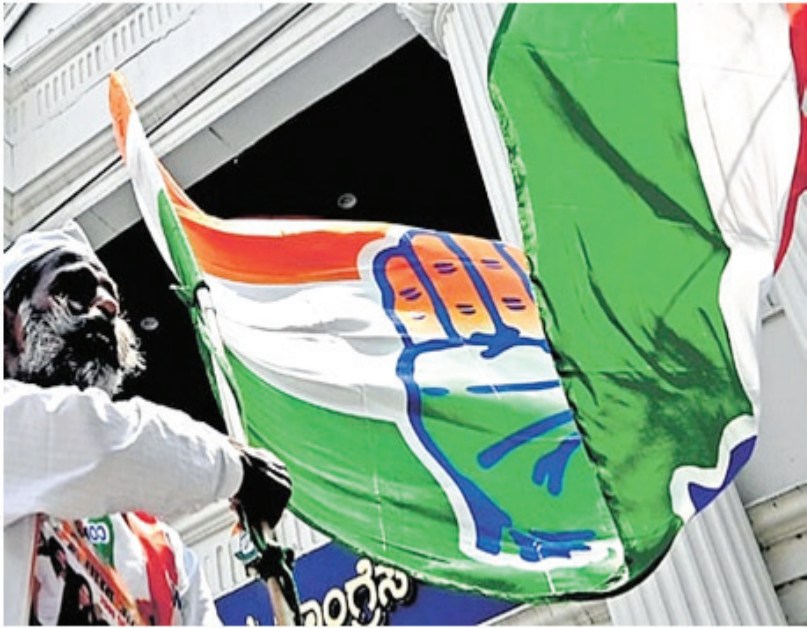
TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah met Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi to discuss various issues concerning the Karnataka Congress government, which is nearing its two-year anniversary on May 20. Amid speculation about a possible cabinet reshuffle and a change of guard within the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), party insiders revealed that the high command is not

ready to deliberate on these matters at present. Rahul Gandhi reportedly expressed displeasure over the public discussion of the alleged honeytrap issue involving Cooperation Minister KN Rajanna, preferring it to be resolved internally. Siddaramaiah assured Rahul of handling the matter discreetly to prevent further damage to the party's image. Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar dismissed suggestions that the meeting focused on vacant

MLC seats, indicating that discussions on those would occur later. Speculation about replacing the KPCC president continues, with Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre emerging as a potential candidate due to his Veerashaiva-Lingayat background, seen as a balance against Siddaramaiah's AHINDA representation and Shivakumar's Vokkaliga leadership.



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Cabinet Shakeup: Congress Loyalists Propose Kamaraj Plan Proposal to induct 25 senior MLAs for fresh leadership

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Speculation about an imminent cabinet reshuffle in Karnataka has stirred political circles, with Congress loyalists advocating for the implementation of the ‘Kamaraj Plan’ to inject fresh energy into governance.

Party insiders argue that retaining the same ministers from the Siddaramaiah-led government (2013-18), the coalition with HD Kumaraswamy, and the current Congress administration has led to stagnation, inefficiency, and public disillusionment.

A senior party functionary noted that the dominance of familiar faces over the years has stifled dynamic governance, calling for a strategic redistribution of power. The Kamaraj Plan, initiated by Congress leader K Kamaraj in the 1960s, involves experienced ministers stepping down to assume orga-

nizational roles, allowing new leaders to take charge.

In Karnataka, proponents of this strategy suggest inducting 25 senior MLAs who have been elected three or four times into the cabinet, thereby addressing negative perceptions and preparing for the upcoming ZP/TP polls.

Insiders believe a reshuffle is essential to prevent further dissent within the Congress Legislative Party. Retaining a few senior ministers for another year to mentor the new leadership is seen as crucial for maintaining governance continuity. Political analysts suggest this move could enhance the party's credibility, which has been marred by unmet public expectations.

As Congress navigates internal challenges, all eyes are now on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and the party high command to see if a power shift will take place.

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Will DK Shivakumar Give Up KPCC President Post?

Shivakumar avoided giving a clear answer about his potential replacement and remarked that decisions would be made according to the party's requirements. Despite speculation, he hasn't met Sonia Gandhi recently, fueling rumors of internal disagreements.

Meanwhile, Siddaramaiah held discussions with Union Hydropower Minister CR Patil regarding the Alamatti Dam height issue, advocating for a gazette notification to raise the dam's height to 524 feet. He also highlighted ongoing preparations for land acquisition and the government's commitment to expedite the project.

In addition, Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar discussed water-sharing issues involving the Krishna, Kaveri, and Godavari rivers, urging the Union government to declare the Alamatti project a national project. The Supreme Court's pending decision on Karnataka's argument regarding Mekedatu was also noted.

The Congress high command is expected to address the KPCC leadership change and other appointments after completing its internal consultations.

CM Siddaramaiah Meets Rahul, KPCC Change & Cabinet Rejig on Hold

Meanwhile, PWD Minister Satish Jarkiholi had earlier briefed AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal on the honeytrap matter, and Venugopal reportedly updated Rahul Gandhi. Cooperation Minister Rajanna's visit to Delhi further fueled expectations of internal discussions.

The Congress high command is expected to address KPCC changes and cabinet reshuffles after the government completes its second anniversary. Discussions over four vacant MLC posts have reportedly concluded, with new faces likely to be announced soon. Rahul Gandhi also advised Siddaramaiah to consult AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge before finalizing decisions.

Celebrations marking the government's two-year milestone are planned across four divisions of the state, as suggested by the high command.

Rajanna Eyeing KPCC Chief Post? Minister's Son's Mysuru Tour Sparks Speculation

While some Congress leaders in Mysuru dismissed the visit as a routine temple tour and community outreach, others believe the Rajanna-Rajendra duo is strategically building support within the ST community to strengthen their claim for the KPCC President post.

The high command's decision on the KPCC leadership is eagerly awaited, especially with speculations about a possible Cabinet reshuffle also circulating.

CM Siddaramaiah Meets Jal Shakti Minister, Seeks Approval for Key Projects

- Appeal for clearance of Mekedatu project by Central Water Commission
- Request for Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II gazette notification
- Demand for equitable share in Godavari-Cauvery Link Project

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, along with Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti V Somanna, met Union Jal Shakti Minister CR Patil in New Delhi, urging immediate clearance of the Mekedatu project by the Central Water Commission.

The Chief Minister emphasized that the Mekedatu project serves the interests of both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. According to him, excess water can be stored during good years to ensure steady releases to Tamil Nadu during lean years. Additionally, the project is expected to benefit Bengaluru's drinking water supply.

Siddaramaiah also request-



ed the Centre to issue a gazette notification for the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II award. He further urged the Union Government to reassess state-wise provisions for irri-

gation water use under the Godavari (Inchampalli Barrage) - Cauvery Link Project to ensure Karnataka receives its rightful share based on equity and equitable apportionment.

Jal Shakti Minister Assures Meeting Between Krishna Basin States – Dy CM DKS



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar announced on Friday that Union Jal Shakti Minister C R Paatil has assured Karnataka of convening a meeting with Krishna basin states to address the ongoing dispute over Krishna river water allocation. Shivakumar, along with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, met the Union Minister in New Delhi on Thursday to discuss unresolved issues with the Jal Shakti Ministry.

During the meeting, Karnataka highlighted the pending notification of the Krishna Water Dispute Tribunal (KWDT) final award.

The Union Minister assured that a meeting involving Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tel-

- Meeting with Union Minister C R Paatil for Krishna river water dispute resolution
- Demand for national project status for Alamatti dam enhancement
- Appeal for environmental clearance for Kalasa-Bhanduri project

angana, and Maharashtra would be held to seek an amicable resolution. Shivakumar also requested national project status for the Alamatti dam enhancement, noting that the land acquisition process had been completed.

Additionally, Karnataka sought environmental clearance for the Kalasa-Bhanduri project and requested grants for the Yettinahole project, which is focused on providing drinking water. The Union Minister reportedly promised

to review the Detailed Project Report (DPR).

Responding to a court order directing the release of Krishna waters, Shivakumar maintained that the release could not happen abruptly and dismissed the possibility of a court directive on the matter.

He also addressed concerns about discussions with Tamil Nadu over the Mekedatu project, stating, “They are doing their politics, and we do ours. We have a different method to handle the issue.”

MUDA Case: Special Court to Hear ED's Plea on Closure Report on April 8th

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The special court handling criminal cases against sitting and former MPs/MLAs has adjourned the hearing on the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) plea concerning the MUDA case to April 8. The case involves CM Siddaramaiah, his wife, and others.

Advocate Madhukar Deshpande, representing the ED, filed an application seeking the court's permission to file a protest petition against the ‘B’ final report (closure report) submitted by the Lokayukta

police. Deshpande argued that under Section 66(2) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) of 2002, the ED is empowered to share information pertinent to the case.

Deshpande claimed that although the ED provided relevant information to the Lokayukta police, it was not properly considered.

Citing judgments from the Supreme Court and the Madras High Court, he contended that the ED has the authority to submit a protest petition to bring factual aspects before the court.



Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) Venkatesh Arabatti, representing the Lokayukta, requested a short accommoda-

tion to provide clarification. Judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat accepted the request and adjourned the matter to April 8.

Special Court Rejects Prajwal Revanna's Petition to Discharge from Sexual Assault Case

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A special court in Bengaluru has rejected the petition filed by former Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna seeking discharge from a sexual assault case, stating that sufficient material exists to proceed with framing charges.

Prajwal is accused of sexually assaulting a domestic help at his Gannikada farmhouse in Hassan district and at his Basavanagudi residence in Bengaluru during the Covid lockdown

period in 2021.

Judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat noted that while the veracity of digital evidence requires thorough examination during the trial, the available evidence currently creates a strong suspicion regarding the alleged incidents. The court observed that the statements of witnesses and materials collected by the investigating agency also contribute to this suspicion.

Rejecting Prajwal's argument that the CID is not com-

petent to file a chargesheet, the judge stated that the court is only assessing whether there is sufficient material to frame charges, not to judge the case on its merits.

The court underscored that the victim's testimony is crucial and should be accepted unless proven tainted or manipulated. Additionally, the court acknowledged that digital evidence is a significant aspect of the case, although the device used for recording the incident has not been recovered.



The case will proceed to trial, where the evidence and statements will be examined in detail.

No Rift in Congress, But I Wasn't Invited to Delhi: Home Minister Parameshwara

- Denies internal confusion within Congress
- Questions why he was not invited to Karnataka Bhavan inauguration
- Asserts cordial relationship with DK Shivakumar

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara has dismissed reports of internal rifts within the Congress while expressing surprise over not being invited to the inauguration of the new Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi. The foundation stone for the building was laid by Parameshwara himself during his tenure as deputy chief minister. On Wednesday, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi, and other leaders inaugurated the new Karnataka Bhavan. Parameshwara, when questioned



about his absence, remarked, “I laid the foundation stone for it when I was the deputy chief minister. I don't know why I wasn't invited. For me to go to Delhi, I need an invite. In the absence of one, how do I go? Yes, I saw photos. I'm not seen.” The Home Minister, however, insisted there was no discord within the party, saying, “Where's the internal confusion? Congress is in

power. We're running the government and providing programmes. Differences in opinions naturally exist, but that shouldn't be misconstrued as confusion.” He also rejected suggestions of a strained relationship with DK Shivakumar, stating, “Nothing like that. I'll go to his house right now if I want to. We're good friends.” On the discussion about replacing Shivakumar as the Karnataka Congress president, Parameshwara acknowledged that such talks were not new. “Before I became the KPCC president for the second time, the situation was similar. Senior leaders met and decided to continue with me,” he said. Regarding the party's plans for filling four vacant MLC positions, Parameshwara downplayed his personal opinions, saying, “This is passage of time. Changes keep happening. When fresh water flows, old water makes way.”

BJP Worker's Suicide Sparks Political Row



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The suicide of BJP worker Vinay Somaia in Bengaluru has escalated into a major political controversy, with allegations and counterclaims between the BJP and Congress. Vinay, who was found hanging in his office in Nagawara, had posted a death note on WhatsApp before taking his own life. In his note, he accused Congress MLA A.S. Ponnanna's close associate, Tennera

Mahina, of being responsible for his plight. BJP leaders have demanded an FIR against Ponnanna, claiming political harassment led to Vinay's extreme step. However, Ponnanna dismissed these allegations, questioning the authenticity of the death note. He raised doubts about how a digital note could be considered valid evidence, stating that BJP was politicizing the incident. Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru, Ponnanna clarified that the case against Vinay was filed in February based on a court directive, not due to political influence. He emphasized that BJP leaders were interfering with the police investigation and had even contacted senior officers. He urged everyone to wait for the investigation to reveal the truth. Ponnanna also extended condolences to Vinay's family, stating that no family should have to endure such pain. He accused BJP of using personal tragedies for political mileage and insisted that the matter be handled through due legal process. The case has intensified political tensions, with BJP holding protests demanding action against those named in the note. The police have assured a thorough investigation, while opposition leaders continue to debate the circumstances surrounding Vinay's tragic demise. As the probe progresses, the political blame game is expected to intensify further

BJP Rebels Support Party's Decision



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

In a significant development within Karnataka's BJP unit, MLA Kumar Bangarappa has expressed allegiance to the party's decision to expel senior leader and rebel MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal. Speaking at a press conference held at his residence, Bangarappa acknowledged Yatnal's pivotal role in the Waqf board agitation but firmly stated that the BJP high command had taken a final call on his expulsion and that they fully support the leadership's verdict. Bangarappa noted that although some dissenters had continued to meet separately, the party's direction would be upheld. “Yes, Yatnal had a key role in the Waqf protest. But now, the high command has made its decision, and we are committed to following it,” he said. The statement comes amid ongoing tensions in

the state unit, with Yatnal being seen as a prominent voice of internal dissent and a known critic of the party's internal affairs and decisions. Despite the expulsion, the group of rebel MLAs hasn't formally disbanded, sparking speculation about future moves. However, Bangarappa's stance appears to indicate a potential return to discipline and alignment with the central leadership, as the party braces itself for upcoming electoral challenges. This statement from Bangarappa is seen as an attempt to stabilize the situation and reassure the leadership about the commitment of the remaining MLAs. As internal politics continues to unfold, all eyes remain on whether other rebel voices will fall in line or continue to push back against the party's disciplinary actions.

Karnataka BJP Worker's Suicide Sparks Controversy

TPN Correspondent |Karnataka

A BJP worker in Karnataka, Vinay Somaiah, allegedly committed suicide on Friday after being arrested over remarks about Congress MLA A.S. Ponnanna. In his final note, Somaiah stated that his death should serve as a lesson against politically motivated FIRs. The incident occurred in the early hours of Friday within the Hennur police station limits in Bengaluru. Somaiah, 35, reportedly ended his life at the BJP party office in HBR Layout after posting his suicide note in a WhatsApp group. According to police, he had arrived at the office the previous night and stayed there before taking the extreme step. In his note, he questioned the basis for FIRs being filed based on mere allegations, urging authorities to be more cautious before registering cases. He pleaded for his message to be shared widely on social media to prevent innocent people from being targeted by false complaints. Somaiah also named Congress worker Tennera Maina, accusing him of playing a role in his suffering. He alleged that he was made an admin of a WhatsApp group just five days before an FIR was filed against him and claimed that



the case was politically motivated to tarnish his reputation. He further accused Maina of making the news viral across Kodagu district and using his personal photo without consent, causing humiliation for his family. Somaiah, who had not spoken to his mother since his arrest, also referenced another alleged suicide linked to Maina. His death has sparked outrage, with BJP leaders condemning the incident and demanding an investigation into the circumstances leading to his suicide. The case has ignited debates over the misuse of FIRs for political vendettas, highlighting concerns over mental distress caused by public defamation and legal harassment.

HC Dismisses Vinay Kulkarni's Plea in Yogesh Gowda Murder Case



TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

The Karnataka High Court has dismissed the petition filed by MLA and accused Vinay Kulkarni in the Yogesh Gowda murder case. Kulkarni had challenged the decision to make Basavaraj Muttagi an approver in the case, but the court rejected his plea and directed the Special Court for public representatives to complete the trial within four weeks. The court also dismissed a petition filed by Yogesh Gowda's wife, Mallavva. Basavaraj Muttagi, a key accused in the case, had turned approver and given a statement detailing how the crime was planned and executed. He confessed before the

court that Vinay Kulkarni was responsible for orchestrating the murder. According to Muttagi's statement, local youths in Dharwad had refused to participate in the murder, prompting Kulkarni to bring in hired killers from Bengaluru. On June 15, 2016, BJP leader Yogesh Gowda was murdered in front of a gym in Dharwad. Muttagi, who was a close aide of Kulkarni, revealed in court that the entire murder was plotted under the MLA's instructions. His testimony further strengthened the case against Kulkarni, reinforcing the prosecution's claims that the murder was politically motivated. The High Court's decision is a setback for Kulkarni, as it paves the way for the trial to proceed swiftly. With the court mandating the completion of the case within a month, the focus now shifts to the trial proceedings, where further revelations are expected. The case has been a major political flashpoint, drawing intense scrutiny from both the BJP and Congress. Kulkarni, who has maintained his innocence, now faces a tougher legal battle as the trial reaches its final stages.

Sachin Chalugarayaswamy Enters Politics

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

Karnataka's political landscape is once again witnessing the entry of another influential leader's son into active politics. This time, it's Sachin, son of senior Congress leader and Minister N. Chalugarayaswamy, who is preparing to take the political plunge from Mandya district—famously known as the “Sugar Bowl” of the state and a politically vibrant region that has produced MLAs, MPs, ministers, and even a Chief Minister. While many children of prominent politicians have entered the political fray in recent years with mixed outcomes, Sachin's entry is being closely watched. Already active in the Nagamangala constituency, Sachin, who previously dabbled in Sandalwood, is now focused on grassroots engagement. He is regularly seen attending local body elections, community programs, sports events, and has even contested the Brahmadevarahalli Primary Agricultural Credit Cooperative Society polls, signaling his early grooming for a bigger political role. Chalugarayaswamy, a political heavyweight in the region, is reportedly laying the groundwork to ensure his son is well-prepared for upcoming assembly or parliamentary elections. Sources suggest that he is determined to

see Sachin eventually become an MLA or MP and is strategizing well in advance to avoid the pitfalls that other political heirs have faced. A case in point is HD Kumaraswamy's son, Nikhil, who contested unsuccessfully in Mandya but later saw his father bounce back to win and secure a Union Minister berth. Learning from such setbacks, Chalugarayaswamy is believed to be taking a meticulous approach to build Sachin's political profile steadily. As Mandya continues to be a battleground for legacy politics, all eyes will now be on Sachin to see whether he can turn his political debut into a lasting career or face the challenges that have previously shaken political dynasties



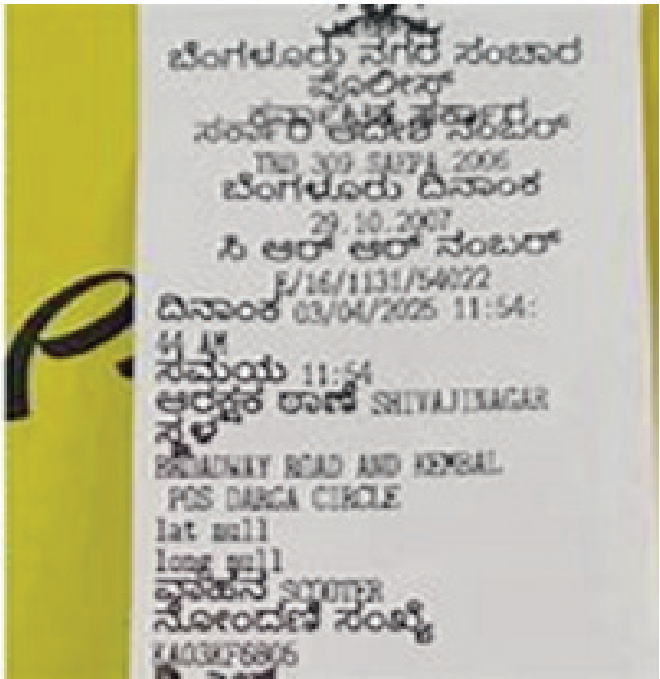
Man Fined for Watching IPL While Riding

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a bizarre yet concerning incident from Bengaluru, a man was fined ₹1,500 by the traffic police for watching an IPL match on his phone while riding an electric bike. The event took place in the bustling Shivajinagar area, known for its high traffic density and narrow streets. To traffic authorities, the rider was seen operating his vehicle with one hand while keeping his eyes glued to a live IPL cricket match being streamed on his phone in the other. The act not only violated basic traffic rules but also posed a serious threat to his own safety as well as that of others on the road.

The traffic police team on patrol in the area noticed the unusual behavior and immediately stopped the individual. Upon questioning, the man admitted to being a die-hard cricket fan and confessed he couldn't resist watching the match even while on the move. However, the authorities were not amused and issued a challan of ₹1,500 under sections related to negligent driving and use of a mobile phone while riding. Officials emphasized that watching videos or engaging with a mobile device while driving, whether it's a two-wheeler or a car, is extremely dangerous and punishable by law. They further reiterated their commitment to

ensuring public safety on the roads, especially during peak hours when such distractions can lead to major accidents. The incident quickly went viral on social media, with mixed reactions from the public. While some users criticized the rider's irresponsible behavior, others found it humorous that someone would go to such lengths to catch a live cricket match. Traffic police have urged citizens to act responsibly and prioritize safety over entertainment while commuting. They warned that similar violations in the future would be dealt with strictly. This case serves as a reminder that distractions, even in the name of cricket, can come at a cost.



‘Murdered’ Woman Appears in Court

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a shocking twist to a suspected murder case, a woman believed to be dead made a surprise appearance in court in Mysuru, leaving everyone—including the complainant—stunned. The woman, identified as Mallige, had reportedly been presumed dead under mysterious circumstances. However, on April 1, 2025, a video surfaced showing her alive and in the company of another man. The discovery was made by the complainant, who immediately brought the evidence to the attention of the court. Taking swift action, the court issued a summons for Mallige to appear in person. To everyone's astonishment, she



complied and was present in court, confirming that she was not only alive but also living elsewhere voluntarily. The case had earlier triggered a police investigation following claims of her disappearance and possible foul play. Based on initial reports and the absence of her where-

abouts, suspicions of murder had been raised. Mallige's appearance has now completely changed the direction of the case. During preliminary questioning in court, she clarified that she had left of her own free will and was not under duress. Her statement contradicted earlier assumptions made

in the case, raising serious questions about the accuracy of the initial complaint and the motives behind it. Legal experts say the court will now focus on verifying the circumstances that led to the misunderstanding and the filing of a potentially false complaint. Authorities may also examine whether any criminal charges can be brought against those who falsely presumed or reported her dead. The incident has sparked discussions in legal circles about the importance of verifying facts thoroughly before filing charges in missing person cases. What began as a grim murder mystery has now turned into a dramatic courtroom revelation, illustrating once again that truth can often be stranger than fiction.

ICAR Develops Cashew Nut Separator Models

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

After nearly five years of dedicated research, two premier institutions under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) — ICAR-Directorate of Cashew Research (DCR), Puttur, and ICAR-Central Institute of Agricultural Engineering (CIAE), Bhopal — have successfully developed three innovative models of mechanised cashew nut separators. The collaborative project aims to address a long-standing challenge in the cashew processing industry: the labor-intensive and time-consuming task of separating cashew nuts from their shells and other residues. These new mechanised solutions are expected to drastically improve efficiency, reduce manual labor, and ensure

higher precision in cashew nut separation. The three models cater to different scales of operation — from small-scale farmers to large processing units — and are designed with user-friendly interfaces, durable build quality, and minimal maintenance requirements. Each machine ensures that the cashew kernels remain intact and are separated cleanly, a key concern in processing where kernel damage can reduce market value. According to officials involved in the project, these machines have been field-tested under various conditions and have shown promising results in terms of throughput, efficiency, and safety. The mechanised approach also promotes hygiene and consistency in



processing, which is essential for both domestic consumption and export standards. The successful outcome of this five-year research marks a significant advancement for the cashew-growing communities, especially in states like Karnataka, Kerala, Goa, and Maharashtra. With rising labor costs and

demand for processed cashews, these models could potentially revolutionize the way cashew processing is handled across the country. The ICAR-DCR and ICAR-CIAE teams are now working on technology transfer and commercial partnerships to ensure these machines are accessible to stakeholders at affordable prices.

Ramanavami Music Festival Begins April 6

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Mysuru is set to witness a grand celebration of classical music as the 109th edition of the Ramanavami Annual Heritage Music Festival kicks off on April 6, 2025. The event, organized by Sri Bidaram Krishnappa Rama Mandira, will run until April 16, featuring an impressive lineup of renowned artists from across the country and abroad. The 11-day cultural extravaganza will be held at Sri Prasanna Seetarama Mandira, located on Narayana Shastri Road, a historic venue that has hosted generations of legendary performers over the decades. According to Raghunandan Rao, honorary secretary of the Mandira, the festival will be inaugurated on Sunday at 6 PM by the institution's president, Jagannath Shenoy. The opening evening promises to set the tone for a soulful and enriching musical journey. True to tradition, the festival will celebrate Ramanavami not only as a religious occasion but also as a vibrant platform for classical music lovers. The stage will welcome artists of international repute, ensuring a blend of time-honored heritage and contemporary excellence in



performance. A highlight of the past editions has been concerts by renowned sisters Ranjani and Gayatri, with the 2019 edition still fresh in the memory of many attendees. This year's festival is expected to deliver equally mesmerizing performances, with schedules to be released soon. Organizers have ensured that the event remains accessible to the public, continuing its legacy as one of the city's most cherished cultural festivals. The Mandira invites all music enthusiasts and devotees to be part of this annual celebration of devotion, heritage, and musical brilliance. With Mysuru steeped in festive spirit, the 109th Ramanavami music festival is all set to strike a perfect chord between tradition and talent.

Leopard Enters Couple's Bedroom in Bengaluru

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a spine-chilling incident on Thursday morning, a leopard walked into a 1-BHK house in Jigani, a suburban locality in Bengaluru, startling an elderly couple as they were seated on their living room sofa. The wild cat eventually found its way into the bedroom and took refuge under the bed. The couple, Venkatesh and his wife Venkatalakshamma, tenants in the Kuntala Reddy Layout, were having their morning tea when the unexpected guest entered through the open gate and door. Initially mistaking it for a stray dog, they were shocked to realize it was, in fact, a leopard. Speaking to forest officials, Venkatesh said, "We saw it coming in and thought it was a dog. My wife was about to shoo it away when she noticed the spotted tail. That's when we realized it was a leopard. We immediately ran out and locked the main door behind us." The incident occurred around 6:30 to 7:00 am. Forest officials later revealed that the leopard had been spotted earlier on the road by some local residents who tried to chase it



away by throwing stones. The frightened animal, in a panic, ran toward the residential area and entered the couple's house, where the gates and doors happened to be open. Officials from the forest department and local police soon arrived at the scene after receiving the emergency call. Rescue operations were launched to safely tranquilize and remove the leopard from the premises. The incident has sparked concern among locals about the increasing human-wildlife conflict in areas bordering forests and wooded zones. Authorities have urged residents to keep their compound gates and doors closed, especially in the early morning and late evening hours. Thankfully, no one was injured during the encounter, but the incident serves as a stark reminder of the fragile boundary between urban life and wildlife.

Four Die in KSRTC Bus-SUV Collision

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A tragic accident on the Bengaluru-Mysuru Expressway claimed the lives of four family members after their SUV was hit by a KSRTC Airavat bus near the Tubinakere exit in Mandya on Thursday afternoon. The deceased have been identified as Satyananda Raje Urs (51), his wife Nishchitha (45), Chandra Raje Urs (62), and his wife Sumedini Rani (50) — all residents of JP Nagar, Bengaluru. The family was en route to Periyapatna in Mysuru district to attend a family event following the demise of a relative. According to police reports, the accident occurred when Chandra Raje Urs, who was driving the SUV, attempted to take the ser-



vice road near the Tubinakere exit in a bid to avoid paying the expressway toll. In the process, the SUV was struck by the speeding KSRTC bus. The impact of the collision was so severe that the SUV was dragged for over 50 metres, leaving no

chance of survival for the passengers inside. Visuals from the scene showed the mangled remains of the vehicle and the heavy damage caused by the high-speed crash. Emergency services rushed to the spot, but all four occupants of the SUV

had already succumbed to their injuries. The bodies were later shifted to the Mandya Institute of Medical Sciences (MIMS) for post-mortem procedures. Police officials stated that preliminary investigations point to a misjudgment in trying to take a shortcut, and emphasized the dangers of sudden diversions on high-speed expressways. Authorities are also reviewing CCTV footage to confirm the sequence of events. This devastating incident has once again raised concerns about toll evasion attempts and unsafe driving practices on expressways. Officials have urged drivers to prioritize safety over saving toll fees, highlighting that shortcuts can sometimes have fatal consequences.

SWR Announces Special Summer Trains

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

To accommodate the surge in passenger demand during the summer season, the South Western Railway (SWR) has announced the operation of special trains connecting Karnataka to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan. These special services aim to ease travel congestion and provide additional options for passengers journeying to northern states. Among the key additions is a special AC train that will operate between Mysuru and Rajasthan, passing through Bengaluru and Hubballi. Additionally, a dedicated service between SSS Hubballi and Banaras (Varanasi) has been introduced, featuring six scheduled trips. Train No. 07323 SSS Hubballi-

Banaras Special Express will depart from Hubballi at 9 AM on Saturdays—April 5, 12, 19, 26, and May 3 and 10—arriving in Banaras at 1:15 PM on the following Monday.

The return service, Train No. 07324 Banaras-SSS Hubballi Special Express, will leave Banaras at 9 AM on Tuesdays—April 8, 15, 22, 29, and May 6 and 13—reaching Hubballi at 10 AM on Thursdays. The train will make stops at several key stations en route, including Haveri, Ranibennur, Davangere, Arsikere, Tumakuru, Yelahanka, Hindupur, Anantapur, Secunderabad, Kazipet, Nagpur, Itarsi, Jabalpur, Prayagraj Chheoki, and Mirzapur. The service is designed to cater to passengers traveling across multiple states, ensuring a

convenient and comfortable journey. The train will consist of 20 coaches, including two AC 3-tier coaches, seven sleeper coaches, nine general second-class coaches, and two luggage-cum-guard brake vans. The initiative by SWR is expected to bring much-needed relief to passengers, particularly those heading home for summer vacations or visiting family in northern India. Given the high demand for train travel during this season, the introduction of these services is likely to be welcomed by travelers.

SWR has urged passengers to book their tickets in advance to secure their travel plans, as these special trains are expected to witness high occupancy. By running these additional



services, the railway aims to manage passenger traffic efficiently while ensuring a seam-

less and comfortable experience. With multiple halts and well-planned schedules, these

trains are set to offer an essential travel option for thousands of passengers.

Bengaluru's Namma Metro Becomes Costliest Transit

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Following a recent fare revision, Bengaluru's Namma Metro has emerged as the most expensive metro service in India, surpassing metro systems in cities like Delhi and Chennai. The revised fares, effective from February 9, 2025, have seen a sharp increase, with the maximum ticket price rising by 50%—from ₹60 to ₹90. This marks the second fare revision since the metro's inception in 2011, with the first hike occurring in 2017.

The steep increase has sparked concern among daily commuters, many of whom now find metro travel a growing financial burden. For instance, Mahindra Kumar, a regular passenger commuting between Baiyappanahalli and Cubbon Park, now pays ₹28 for a one-way ride, up from ₹19. This ₹9 increase per trip translates to an additional ₹18 per day and over ₹500 a month, a significant expense for daily travelers. Kumar highlights how not just the metro but also BMTC bus fares have been rising, making public transport in



Bengaluru increasingly costly. The fare hike has reignited the debate over affordability and accessibility of public transportation, with many commuters questioning whether the increased costs align with improvements in service quality and network expansion. Comparisons with other metro systems show that Bengaluru's ticket prices are now the highest in the country, despite its network being smaller than Delhi Metro's extensive system. The fare revision aims to address operational costs and in-

frastructure development, but it also raises concerns about whether the metro remains an economically viable option for the city's working-class population. While metro services are crucial in easing Bengaluru's notorious traffic congestion, the increased costs may push some commuters back to alternative, often less efficient, modes of transport. The fare hike underscores the broader challenge of balancing financial sustainability for metro operations while ensuring affordability for passengers.

Public Well Revival Movement Restores Water Sources

TPN Correspondent | Tamilnadu

In an effort to revive traditional and sustainable water sources, the Public Well Revival Movement has been working across Tamil Nadu to restore defunct public wells. Over the past four years, the group has successfully revived 15 such wells through crowdfunding, helping communities regain access to clean and reliable water sources. One such success story unfolds in the village of Solakanai, nestled in the Bargur hills of Erode district, where women have long trekked to a mountain stream multiple times a day to fetch water. Their village well, once buried under sediment and boulders, has now been brought back to life, thanks to the intervention of Madhu Manjari Selvaraj and her team. The revival effort involved clearing the well, dredging it, and constructing a protective wall using locally sourced rocks. A handful of villagers, particularly men, participated in building a barrier against the stream's flow, ensuring that the well remained replenished with fresh wa-



ter. The well was officially reopened last month, offering a renewed sense of hope for the community. The revival of such wells not only reduces the burden on women who bear the responsibility of collecting water but also promotes the use of ancient, sustainable water management practices. Across Tamil Nadu, many traditional wells have fallen into disuse due to neglect, urbanization,

and shifts toward modern but often unreliable water supply systems. The Public Well Revival Movement aims to change that narrative by reconnecting people with their ancestral water sources. Through crowdfunding and community participation, the initiative has been instrumental in restoring these wells, making clean drinking water more accessible to rural populations.

No Samagra Shiksha Funds for Three States

TPN Correspondent | Kerala

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal have not received any funds from the Centre's share under the Ministry of Education's flagship Samagra Shiksha scheme (SSA) for the financial year 2024-25 as of March 27, 2025. This was revealed in a Rajya Sabha response by Minister of State for Education, Jayant Choudhary, to a question raised by CPI(M) MP John Brittas. Despite the approval of central allocations amounting to ₹328.90 crore for Kerala, ₹2,151.60 crore for Tamil Nadu, and ₹1,745.80 crore for West Bengal, no funds had been disbursed to these states, raising concerns over the scheme's implementation and its impact on education. A recent report by a Parliamentary Standing Committee warned that the withholding of funds was having severe consequences, particularly affecting teachers' salaries, reimbursements under the Right to Education (RTE) Act, and transportation facilities for students in remote areas. The SSA scheme plays a crucial role in providing financial assistance to states for improving school infrastructure, hiring teachers, and ensuring access to quality



education for children, especially in underprivileged communities. The delay in fund disbursement has put additional strain on state governments, which are now struggling to manage these essential educational services without central support. Experts and educationists fear that a prolonged lack of funds could disrupt schooling for millions of children and weaken the progress made under SSA in ensuring equitable education. While the Centre has not provided specific reasons for the delay, state officials have urged the Union government to expedite the release of funds, emphasizing that education should not be caught in bureaucratic or political gridlock. The issue has sparked criticism from various quarters, with opposition leaders accusing the Centre of financial discrimination against states governed by non-BJP parties.

Kerala HC Stays Case Against Baba Ramdev

TPN Correspondent | Kerala

The Kerala High Court has stayed all proceedings against Yoga guru Baba Ramdev, his associate Acharya Balakrishna, and their company, Divya Pharmacy, in a case related to allegedly misleading advertisements. Justice V G Arun issued the stay on Thursday, halting the case in the Palakkad magisterial court for three months. The decision came after the court found prima facie merit in the petitioners' claim that the cognisance of the offence had been taken beyond the prescribed period of limitation. The case was filed under the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, and the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, which regulate misleading claims in advertisements related to drugs and medicinal products.

According to the court, Section 3(d) read along with Section 7 of the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, as well as Section 550 of the BNSS, suggest that the lower court may have



taken cognisance of the alleged offence beyond the statutory limitation period. The stay order provides temporary relief to Baba Ramdev and his associates, delaying any immediate legal action against them.

The case stems from allegations that Ramdev and his company promoted products with exaggerated or unverified health benefits, potentially misleading consumers. The issue of misleading advertisements has been a point of contention in the wellness and pharmaceutical industries, with regulatory bodies tightening norms to prevent false claims. Critics argue that such cases should be handled with urgency to prevent misinformation, while supporters of Ramdev maintain that the charges are unfounded and politically motivated.

Chennai's Residential Market Sees 10% Growth

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

Chennai's residential real estate market witnessed a 10% year-on-year growth in sales during the first quarter of 2025, with 4,357 units sold, according to a report by Knight Frank India. The market also saw an increase in new launches, with 4,576 units introduced, reflecting a 5% year-on-year growth. The report, titled India Real Estate: Office and Residential (January-March 2025) Q1 2025, highlighted that the average weighted residential price in the city rose by 7% to ₹4,854 per sq.ft, indicating steady demand in the housing sector.

Alongside residential growth, Chennai's commercial real estate market experienced a significant surge, with transactions totaling 1.8 million sq.ft during the first quarter, marking a remarkable 56% year-on-year increase. The completion of 0.2 million sq.ft of new office spaces further boosted the sector, signaling continued expansion. The demand for office spaces also led to a 3% rise in average rents, reaching ₹69.2 per sq.ft per month, reflecting strong occupier interest.

The report pointed out that



Global Capability Centres (GCCs) remained the key drivers of demand in Chennai's office market, accounting for 0.9 million sq.ft of transactions. Flexible workspaces also saw substantial leasing activity, recording 0.54 million sq.ft of space taken up during the quarter.

The growth in both residential and commercial sectors underlines Chennai's increasing attractiveness for homebuyers and businesses alike. With property prices and rental yields steadily rising, the city continues to emerge as a strong real estate hub in India. Industry experts suggest that factors such as infrastructure development, job opportunities, and sustained investor confidence are contributing to the market's robust performance. If this trend continues, Chennai is likely to remain a key player in India's real estate sector, offering promising opportunities for developers, investors, and homebuyers in the coming months.

Godavari: SEIZE THE DRAINAGES

THE POINT DESK

This film revolves around the River Godavari and the pride of those who claim to belong to the Godavari region. However, it raises an important question—do they truly cherish and love the river? The story, dialogues, direction, and production of this film are by Galidevara Thamesh.

Q1: What inspired you to make this short film on Godavari River pollution?

Galidevara Thamesh: Growing up near the Godavari River, I have seen how it has been a lifeline for millions. But over the years, pollution has turned it into a dumping ground. The major issue is untreated sewage and drainage water directly flowing into the river. This deeply disturbed me, and I felt the need to create awareness through a medium that can visually impact people—hence, this short film.

Q2: Can you give us an overview of the film’s storyline?

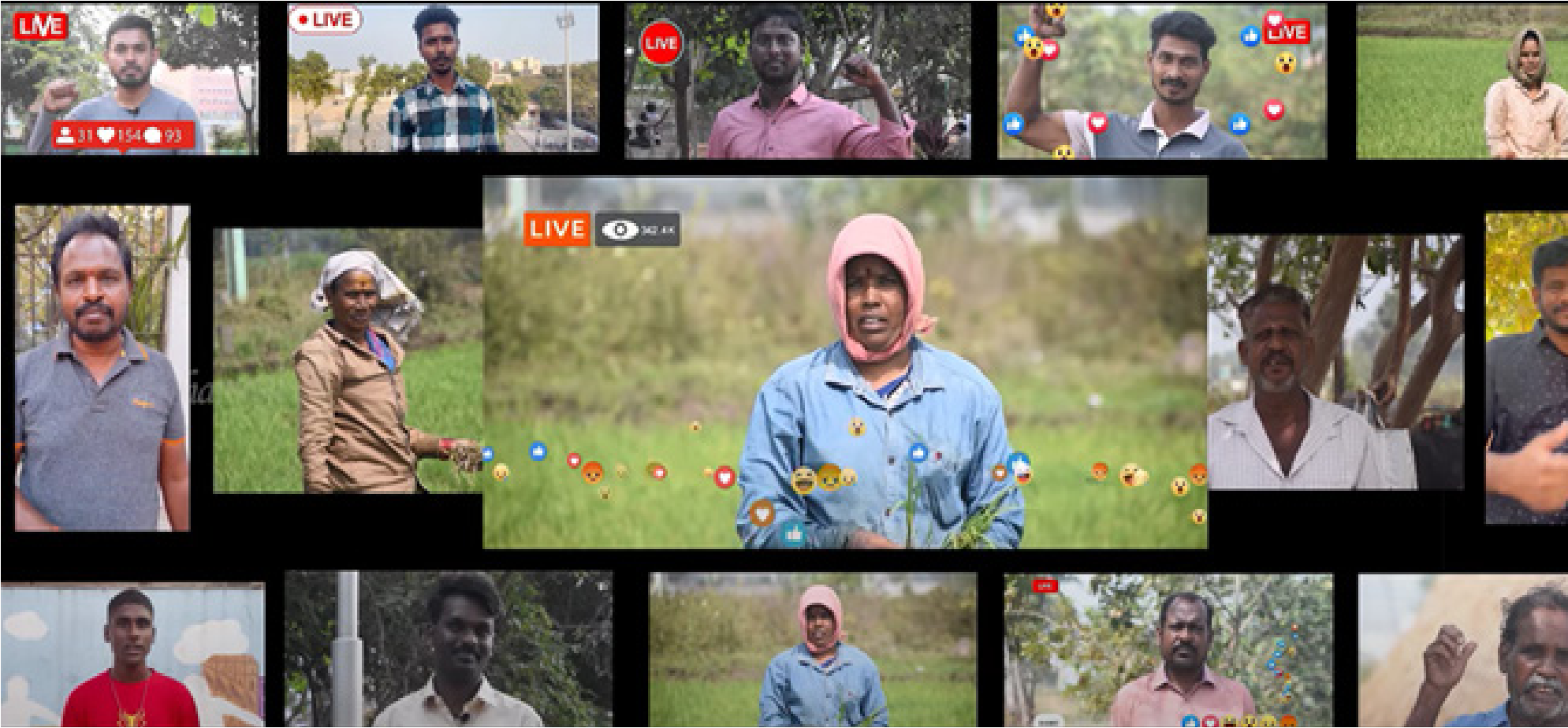
GT: The film follows the journey of a young environmentalist who exposes the increasing pollution in the Godavari River. It showcases the real problems—untreated sewage, lack of purification systems, and public negligence. The story builds awareness and urges the audience to take action before the situation worsens.

Q3: What message are you trying to convey through this film?

GT: The main message is simple—a clean river is a collective responsibility. Authorities must improve sewage treatment infrastructure, industries must follow environmental regulations, and people must stop polluting the river. If we don’t act now, future generations will inherit a poisoned water source.

Q4: What challenges did you face while making this film?

GT: The biggest challenge was shooting in real polluted locations. Some places had a strong stench, and others were unsafe due to the untreated waste.



Getting the right permissions and ensuring authenticity while maintaining cinematic quality was another hurdle. Financial limitations were also a factor, as this was an independent production.

Q5: How was the response from the audience?

GT: The response has been phenomenal! Even though this is a new YouTube channel, the film crossed 10,000 views in just 4 days. People have shared it widely, discussed the issue, and even tagged local authorities. This reaction shows that people do care and are ready to support change. I would specially thank my friends who deeply supported me.

Q6: Do you think this film can lead to action from the government or authorities?

GT: Awareness is the first step toward action. If enough people demand a solution, authorities will have no choice but to respond. I am planning to share this film with environmental or-



ganizations, policymakers, and municipal bodies to push for stricter sewage treatment regulations.

Q7: Is there a specific area along the Godavari River where pollution is worse?

GT: Yes, multiple areas, especially near major towns and cities, face severe pollution. Many drains discharge untreated sewage directly into the river. In some places, industrial waste is also a major concern. Proper sewage treatment plants and stricter monitoring are needed urgently.

Q8: What role do industries and the public play in this issue?

GT: Both are responsible. Some industries release untreated chemical waste, which is highly toxic. On the other hand, people also contribute by throwing garbage, plastic, and other waste into the river. Without public cooperation, even the best policies will fail.

Q9: Do you plan to continue making films on social and environmental issues?

GT: Absolutely. This is just the beginning. I want to use filmmaking as a tool to bring attention to real issues affecting our society. I plan to make more films covering topics like Political Party

followers, Money in Politics, and Culture.

Q10: What’s your message to the public and authorities?

GT: To the public—don’t wait for the government to act; start by doing your part. Stop dumping waste into the river and raise your voice for change. To the authorities—build proper sewage treatment plants, enforce stricter regulations, and take immediate action before we lose the Godavari forever.

Conclusion

Galidevara Thamesh’s “Godavari: Seize the Drainages” is not just a short film—it is a wake-up call. Through powerful storytelling rooted in reality, he compels both citizens and authorities to confront an environmental crisis that can no longer be ignored. As the river silently suffers the consequences of neglect, Thamesh’s film stands as a passionate plea for awareness, responsibility, and most importantly, collective action to save the Godavari for future generations.

Revanth Reddy was all about lake protection last year. This year, he’s destroying them Bulldozing Green Spaces for IT Parks

In just a few days, Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has found himself in the midst of a public relations disaster, thanks to the state government’s controversial decision to raze approximately 400 acres of land near the University of Hyderabad (UoH). What began as a simple development project has sparked widespread protests, police crackdowns, and heated debates about the balance between urban development and environmental preservation.

The land in question, near the UoH campus, is not just any piece of real estate; it is home to a rich biodiversity, including a lake, ancient rock formations like the Mushroom Rock, and a variety of wildlife. This 400-acre area houses 233 species of birds, as well as Bengal Monitor Lizards, Star Tortoises, and spotted deer. For students, the green space has long been viewed as a central, peaceful lung for the campus. However, the state government intends to convert the land into an IT park, leading to an outcry among students, environmentalists, and local activists.

Protests erupted last week when JCB bulldozers appeared on the UoH campus, triggering a violent police crackdown. The images of distraught animals, including peacocks, and the devastation caused by the bulldozers flooded social media, intensifying public anger. While the Telangana High Court issued an interim order halting the demolition, the state government



shows no signs of reversing its decision.

What makes the situation even more contentious is the fact that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has been vocal about the need to protect lakes and green spaces in Hyderabad. In 2024,

he launched the Hyderabad Disaster Response and Asset Monitoring and Protection Agency (HYDRA), aimed at preventing encroachments on these natural spaces. Now, questions are being raised about whether HYDRA will take action against the state itself for this proposed encroachment.

The background of this issue is rooted in a complex legal dispute. The University of Hyderabad was established in 1974 as part of a settlement after the 1969 Telangana protests. The land on which the university sits, called Kancha Gachibowli, was handed over to the university in 1975, but it was never formally transferred to the university’s ownership. In 2003, the Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC) took control of the 400 acres and handed it over to a private company, IMG Bharata, for development. However, this area remained freely accessible to students without any barriers separating it from the campus.

In 2024, the state government wrested control of this land from IMG Bharata following a legal battle, claiming that the land technically belonged to the state. The government then sought to develop the area into an IT park, which has led to the ongoing protests.

What is particularly striking in this situation is the stark contradiction between the state’s rhetoric and its actions. Revanth Reddy has been a vocal advocate for protecting natural spaces in the city, yet his government’s actions suggest a disregard for environmental concerns when it comes to land acquisition for development. The city of Hyderabad has already witnessed the destruction of other heritage sites and green spaces, such as the ancient Khajaguda rock site, which has been slowly

eaten away by real estate development.

This decision raises several important questions. Can the state justify the destruction of such a valuable ecological space for the sake of development? Is there no alternative land available for the IT park that would not involve the destruction of biodiversity? The ongoing protests show that students and citizens are deeply concerned about the long-term consequences of such projects, and the state’s response has been to silence these concerns through police force.

As tensions mount, it is crucial for the Telangana government to reconsider its decision and engage in meaningful dialogue with the University of Hyderabad authorities, students, and environmentalists. The state may technically own the land, but it must also acknowledge its responsibility to protect the environment and respect the wishes of its citizens. Bulldozing green spaces and silencing protests is not the solution.

The current situation serves as a reminder of the need to balance development with environmental preservation. The Chief Minister and his government must find a way to reconcile these interests, or risk alienating the very people they claim to serve. As Hyderabad’s urban landscape continues to change, it is essential that the voices of the city’s residents—especially those who care about its natural heritage—are heard and respected.



PM Modi to Inaugurate India’s First Vertical Lift Sea Bridge

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate India’s first vertical lift sea bridge, the new Pamban Rail Bridge, in Tamil Nadu on April 6, coinciding with the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami. The 2.08 km-long bridge, linking Rameswaram to the mainland, is a major infrastructure milestone designed to enhance connectivity while preserving the rich cultural heritage associated with the region. According to a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), Modi will flag off both a train and a ship from the adjacent road bridge and witness the bridge’s vertical lift mechanism in operation. Following the inauguration, the Prime Minister will visit the Ramanathaswamy Temple in Rameswaram, performing darshan and pooja at one of the most revered pilgrimage sites in India. The PMO highlighted the bridge’s deep cultural significance, referencing the Ramayana, in which the legendary Ram Setu is believed to have originated near Dhanushkodi. Built at a cost of over ₹550 crore, the bridge features 99 spans and a 72.5-meter vertical lift span that rises 17 meters, allowing smooth passage of ships while ensuring uninterrupted train services. The bridge incorporates stainless steel reinforcements, high-grade protective paint, and fully welded joints, making it highly durable and low-maintenance. A special polysiloxane coating protects it from corrosion, ensuring longevity in the harsh marine environment. Additionally, it is designed to support dual rail tracks, keeping future infrastructure demands in mind. At around 1:30 PM, PM Modi will also lay the foundation stone and dedicate rail and road projects worth over ₹8,300 crore in Tamil Nadu. These include the four-laning of the Wala-japet-Ranipet section of NH-40, and the dedication of Viluppuram-Puducherry (NH-332), Poondiyanuppam-Sat-nathapuram (NH-32), and Cholapuram-Thanjavur (NH-36) highway projects. As he addresses the gathering, the Prime Minister’s visit underscores the government’s commitment to strengthening infrastructure, boosting economic growth, and preserving cultural heritage in Tamil Nadu.

PM Modi’s Landmark Visit to Sri Lanka



Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Colombo on Friday evening for a three-day visit aimed at strengthening bilateral ties between India and Sri Lanka. His visit follows his participation in the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) Summit in Bangkok. The Indian prime minister is scheduled to hold extensive discussions with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Disanayake on Saturday, covering a wide range of topics, including energy, trade, digitalization, defense, and connectivity. Both nations are expected to announce around 10 key agreements that will further cement cooperation, particularly in areas of defense, energy security,

- **Modi arrives in Sri Lanka**
- **Talks focus on key sectors**
- **10 agreements expected soon**
- **India supports economic recovery**

ty, and technological advancements. Modi’s visit comes at a crucial time for Sri Lanka, which is gradually recovering from one of its worst economic crises in history. Just three years ago, the island nation faced severe financial distress, prompting India to step in with a financial assistance package worth \$4.5 billion, which played a key role in stabilizing Sri Lanka’s economy. With economic indicators showing signs of improvement, the discussions between the

two leaders will focus on sustainable economic recovery, infrastructure development, and enhanced trade partnerships to ensure long-term financial stability. The Indian prime minister has emphasized the importance of reviewing progress on the joint vision of “Fostering Partnerships for a Shared Future,” a strategic framework aimed at fostering deeper cooperation in multiple sectors. India and Sri Lanka share strong historical, cultural, and economic ties, and

this visit is expected to further reinforce their mutual commitment to regional stability and growth. Enhancing digital connectivity between the two countries, improving defense collaboration, and addressing energy security challenges will be central themes during the talks. Modi’s visit also signals India’s commitment to strengthening its influence in the Indian Ocean region, particularly as China continues to expand its footprint in Sri Lanka through infrastructure investments. As the two nations engage in dialogue, the outcomes of this visit could shape the future of Indo-Sri Lankan relations, paving the way for stronger strategic, economic, and security cooperation.

Veteran Actor Manoj Kumar Passes Away

Legendary actor and filmmaker Manoj Kumar, known for his deep-rooted patriotism on screen, passed away at the age of 87 on April 4, 2025, at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Mumbai. Fondly called “Bharat Kumar” for his remarkable portrayals of nationalist characters in films, Kumar breathed his last at 4:03 am due to cardiogenic shock resulting from an acute myocardial infarction, a severe heart attack. Reports indicate that he had been battling decompensated liver cirrhosis in recent months, which further contributed to his deteriorating health. He was admitted to the hospital on February 21, 2025, as his condition worsened. Born Harikrishan Goswami on July 24, 1937, in Amritsar, Punjab, Manoj Kumar became a towering figure in Indian cinema with his patriotic and socially relevant films. His performances in classics like Shaheed, Upkar, and Purab Aur Paschim left an indelible mark on audiences and established him as a symbol of national pride. Apart from acting, Kumar was also a successful director, delivering thought-provoking films that resonated deeply with the Indian public. His immense contribution to Hindi cinema was recognized with numerous accolades, including seven Filmfare Awards and a National Film Award. In 1992, he was conferred the Padma Shri, one of India’s highest civilian honors, and in 2015, he received the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, the most prestigious recognition in Indian cinema. The news of his passing has left the film fraternity in mourning, with tributes pouring in from colleagues, fans, and admirers. Filmmaker Ashoke Pandit, while speaking to ANI, expressed deep sorrow, calling Manoj Kumar an inspiration and a true doyen of Indian cinema. He reminisced about their meetings and described Kumar as a man full of life and positivity. His absence leaves an irreplaceable void in the industry, and his films will continue to inspire generations to come. As Bollywood bids farewell to one of its greatest icons, Manoj Kumar’s legacy of cinematic excellence and patriotic fervor will remain eternal in the hearts of millions.



Actor Vijay Demands Katchatheevu Retrieval

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief and actor Vijay has reignited the debate over Katchatheevu Island, urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reclaim India’s sovereignty over the disputed territory ahead of his visit to Sri Lanka. As an interim measure, Vijay proposed a 99-year lease of the island, but he maintained that full retrieval remains the only long-term solution to the persistent crisis faced by Tamil Nadu’s fishermen. The actor-politician launched a scathing attack on both the DMK and the BJP-led central government, accusing them of neglecting the plight of Tamil fishermen and failing to take concrete steps toward reclaiming Katchatheevu. He dismissed the DMK’s recent Assembly resolution, which urged the Centre to retrieve the island, as mere “political drama” ahead of the 2026 Tamil Nadu elections. Vijay also reminded the public that the DMK was in power in 1974, when the island was handed over to Sri Lanka under the Indo-Lankan agreement. Furthermore, he criticized the Centre for what he called discriminatory treatment, alleging that while Gujarat fishermen receive protection, their Tamil Nadu counterparts face frequent arrests and boat confiscations by the Sri Lankan Navy. The Katchatheevu retrieval debate gained further traction after Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin wrote to PM Modi, demanding a review of the 1974 Indo-Lankan treaty and urging the Prime Minister to negotiate the release of jailed Tamil fishermen during his Sri Lanka visit. The Tamil Nadu Assembly also passed a resolution echoing these demands, amplifying political pressure on the Modi government. Katchatheevu, a 1.9 sq km island located 12 nautical miles off Rameswaram, has long been a flashpoint in India-Sri Lanka relations. Experts point out that the fish population in the region has declined significantly, forcing Indian fishermen to venture 22 nautical miles into Sri Lankan waters, increasing their risk of arrests.



Tamil Nadu’s NEET Exemption Bill Rejected by Centre

Tamil Nadu’s long-standing demand for an exemption from the National Entrance and Eligibility Test (NEET) suffered a major blow on Friday after President Droupadi Murmu rejected the state’s bill seeking to allow medical admissions based on Class XII marks. The bill, which was cleared twice by the state legislature in 2021 and 2022, had been pending with the Union government for years before being formally rejected. Chief Minister MK Stalin, addressing the Assembly, condemned the rejection as an “insult to Tamil Nadu” and called it a “black phase in federalism”. He pointed out that despite the Tamil Nadu government providing all necessary clarifications, the BJP-led Centre had refused to consider the exemption. In response, Stalin announced a meeting of all legislature parties on April 9 to discuss further legal and political actions. He emphasized that Tamil Nadu’s fight against NEET is far from over and that legal experts would be consulted to explore lawful measures to challenge the Centre’s decision. The controversy surrounding NEET in Tamil Nadu has been ongoing for years. The state’s primary argument against the system is that it disproportionately benefits students from wealthier families, who can afford expensive coaching, while students from rural and marginalized backgrounds struggle to compete. Switching to Class 12 marks for admissions, the state argues, would promote social justice and equitable access to medical education. Tamil Nadu has been vocal about its opposition, passing a unanimous Assembly resolution in 2023 urging the Centre to scrap NEET altogether. The state has also witnessed tragic incidents of student suicides linked to NEET pressure, adding emotional weight to the debate.



‘1000 Gold Cards sold Daily’ Trump’s \$5M visa plan draws global interest

- **New citizenship pathway aims to boost US economy**
- **Each Gold Card offers fast-track to US residency for \$5 million investment**
- **Program replaces EB-5 visa, with simplified process and no job creation clause**

TPN Correspondent | Washington DC

Former US President Donald Trump's newly launched “Gold Card” visa program has caught global attention, offering a streamlined pathway to US citizenship for high-net-worth individuals through a \$5 million investment. According to Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, the program has already seen major traction, with 1,000 Gold Cards sold in a single day, raising \$5 billion. Unveiled as a bold replacement for the EB-5 investor visa program, the Gold Card eliminates complex conditions like job creation, allowing applicants to gain permanent residency in a faster and more efficient manner. The move is being hailed as a game-changer for wealthy individuals looking to establish their future in the United States



while contributing significantly to its economy. “This is an opportunity for the world’s best entrepreneurs and investors to become part of the American dream,” said Lutnick during an appearance on the All-In Podcast. “We’re seeing unprecedented demand.” Key benefits of the Gold Card

include simplified documentation, no business or employment requirements, and a clear path to US citizenship. It positions the US as an attractive destination for global capital, especially at a time when other countries are also vying for investor immigration. Supporters argue the Gold Card

will help revitalize key sectors, including real estate, technology, and infrastructure, through direct capital infusion. With daily sales hitting four digits, the initiative marks a new era in US economic diplomacy—welcoming visionaries, innovators, and investors who are ready to invest in America’s future.

PM Modi meets Bangladesh Chief Adviser Yunus Raises India’s concerns over safety of Hindus

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Relations between India and Bangladesh have soured after Bangladesh's interim leader, Muhammad Yunus, made controversial remarks about Northeast India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised India's concerns during a meeting with Yunus on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC summit in Bangkok on April 4, 2025. Alongside External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Modi expressed India's concerns over the safety of minorities in Bangladesh, particularly Hindus, and urged the Bangladeshi leader to avoid provocative rhetoric that could harm bilateral relations.

The tensions stem from remarks made by Yunus about India's Northeast region. Speaking during a visit to China, Yunus described the Northeast states—often referred to as the “Seven Sisters”—as a landlocked region and suggested that Bangladesh could serve as a “guardian of the



ocean” for the area. His comments were viewed as offensive, particularly by leaders in Assam, who stressed the importance of strengthening transportation links between the Northeast and the rest of India.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma condemned Yunus' statement, pointing out its implications for India's stra-

tegic vulnerabilities. Sarma stressed the need to improve rail and road infrastructure in the region, particularly around the “Chicken's Neck” corridor, a crucial passage that connects Northeast India to the rest of the country. He warned that such remarks could reflect deeper geopolitical motives and suggested that India should explore alternatives to bypass the vulnerable corridor.

In his conversation with Yunus, Modi reiterated India's commitment to a peaceful, stable, and cooperative relationship with Bangladesh, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect and understanding. He also called for a thorough investigation into the safety of minorities in Bangladesh and urged for any inflammatory rhetoric to be avoided to maintain a stable environment between the two nations. The meeting marks the first between Modi and Yunus since the latter took office after the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government in August 2024.

"Heartbroken, Was Unable To Meet Expectations": South Korea's Yoon Apologies



TPN Correspondent | Seoul, South Korea

In a heartfelt statement on Friday, South Korea's ousted president, Yoon Suk Yeol, publicly apologized after the country's Constitutional Court upheld his impeachment over a flawed martial law declaration, which led to his immediate removal from office. The ruling, delivered in a unanimous verdict, officially stripped Yoon of his presidential powers, marking a historic moment in the nation's political history.

“I am truly sorry and heartbroken that I was unable to meet your expectations,” Yoon said in a brief statement following the court's announcement. His apology came after a turbulent period in office, during which his leadership and decisions were widely criticized, culminating in the court's decision to uphold the impeachment motion that had initially been passed by the National Assembly.

Yoon, who served as president for just over a year, faced significant criticism after his controversial decision to declare martial law in response to growing political unrest in the country. The move, which was seen by many as an overreach of presidential powers, sparked widespread protests and led to accusations that Yoon had attempted to undermine South Korea's democratic processes. Critics argued that the declaration was an excessive response to the situation and threatened the stability of the country's democratic institutions.

The Constitutional Court's ruling solidified the concerns of the opposition and civil rights groups, who had long warned that Yoon's actions could set a dangerous precedent. In their unanimous decision, the justices emphasized the importance of maintaining checks and balances within the government, and stated that Yoon's actions had violated constitutional principles by overstepping the bounds of executive authority.

Despite the gravity of the situation, Yoon's apology indicated a sense of remorse, though many political observers were quick to point out that it came too late. Throughout the impeachment proceedings, Yoon had remained steadfast in defending his actions, claiming that his decision to invoke martial law was necessary to protect the country from potential threats. However, as the legal challenges against him mounted, the pressure became too great for him to ignore, culminating in the court's ruling.

The impeachment of a sitting president is a rare and significant event in South Korea, a country known for its vibrant democracy and history of political upheaval. Yoon's removal marks only the third time in the nation's modern history that a president has been impeached, following similar cases involving former presidents Park Geun-hye and Roh Moo-hyun.

In the wake of the court's ruling, political leaders from both the ruling party and opposition have expressed mixed reactions. Some have praised the Constitutional Court for upholding the rule of law, while others have warned that the decision could deepen political divisions in the country. The national discourse has been dominated by debates over whether Yoon's actions were justified, or whether they represented an abuse of power by a president who had not fully grasped the delicate balance of authority within a democracy.

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.

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.

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.

Trump's Continued Tariff Strategy: Pharma Products to Face New Charges Soon

Drugmakers are urging U.S. President Donald Trump to implement pharmaceutical tariffs gradually, as the industry braces for a potential new tariff on imported medical products. According to sources familiar with the discussions, the President is expected to announce a broader tariff plan this week, but details about specific tariffs on pharmaceuticals are unlikely to be revealed immediately.

Trump, who had previously exempted the pharmaceutical sector from past trade wars, has signaled that tariffs on medicines will be a part of his broader trade policy, aimed at reducing reliance on foreign countries for drug production. However, the industry fears the impact of these tariffs, especially the proposed 25% levy, which could make medicines more expensive and potentially lead to shortages.

Industry groups like PhRMA (Pharmaceutical Research and Manu-



facturers of America) argue that bringing more drug production to the U.S. is a long-term process that could take 5 to 10 years and require billions of dollars in investment. This is why they are advocating for a gradual ramp-up of the tariff rate rather than a sudden 25% increase.

In response, the Trump administration appears to be recognizing the challenges involved in shifting drug manufacturing to the U.S. While some sources are hopeful that the administration will con-

sider a more gradual approach to tariff implementation, the industry remains on edge as it prepares for the potential rise in costs.

The announcement expected on Wednesday may include a study looking into how pharma-specific tariffs could be applied, with a possible commitment to a more incremental rollout of tariffs. However, there is still uncertainty about how the tariffs will ultimately be structured and whether any adjustments will be made in response to industry concerns.

Some multinational drugmakers, including Johnson & Johnson, Eli Lilly, AstraZeneca, and GSK, have already made significant investments in U.S. manufacturing to bolster domestic production. Despite this, many of these companies continue to rely on overseas facilities for key components, and increasing production in the U.S. could take years.

Global Shockwaves Hit Indian Markets: Indices Plunge as Tariff Fears Grip Investors

Domestic stock markets were volatile on Friday. Sectoral and benchmark indices were volatile. This was due to the implementation of tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump on countries around the world. As a result, markets in all countries turned red. The same sentiment continued here too. Shares in the metals and pharma sectors fell by 6%. Oil, manufacturing, energy and other sectoral indices also fell by more than 3 percent. In total, investors lost Rs 5 lakh crore in wealth as the Nifty 345 and the Sensex fell by 930 points.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 76,295 in the previous session, opened at 76,160 on Friday. It touched an intraday low of 75,240. It reached an intraday high of 76,258. Finally, it closed at 75,364, losing 930 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 23,190, touched a low of



22,857 and a high of 23,214. It closed at 22,904, down 345 points. The Nifty Bank fell 94 points to settle at 51,502. In the Nifty50, 9 companies gained while 38 lost. Tata Consumer, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Nestle India,

Apollo Hospitals were the top gainers. Tata Steel, Hindalco, ONGC, Tata Motors, and Cipla lost the most. Finance and FMCG indices rose marginally today. Metal and pharma indices fell by 4-6%. Oil, manufactur-

ing, energy, commodities, IT, CPSE, PSE, healthcare and media indices fell by 3 percent. Selling pressure was also seen on consumer durables, auto, infra and PSU bank shares.

Market breadth on NSE turned completely in favor of sellers. 646 shares rose and 2230 fell. Shares of 26 companies reached 52-week highs and 66 shares reached 62-week lows. 146 shares touched the upper circuit and 108 shares touched the lower circuit.

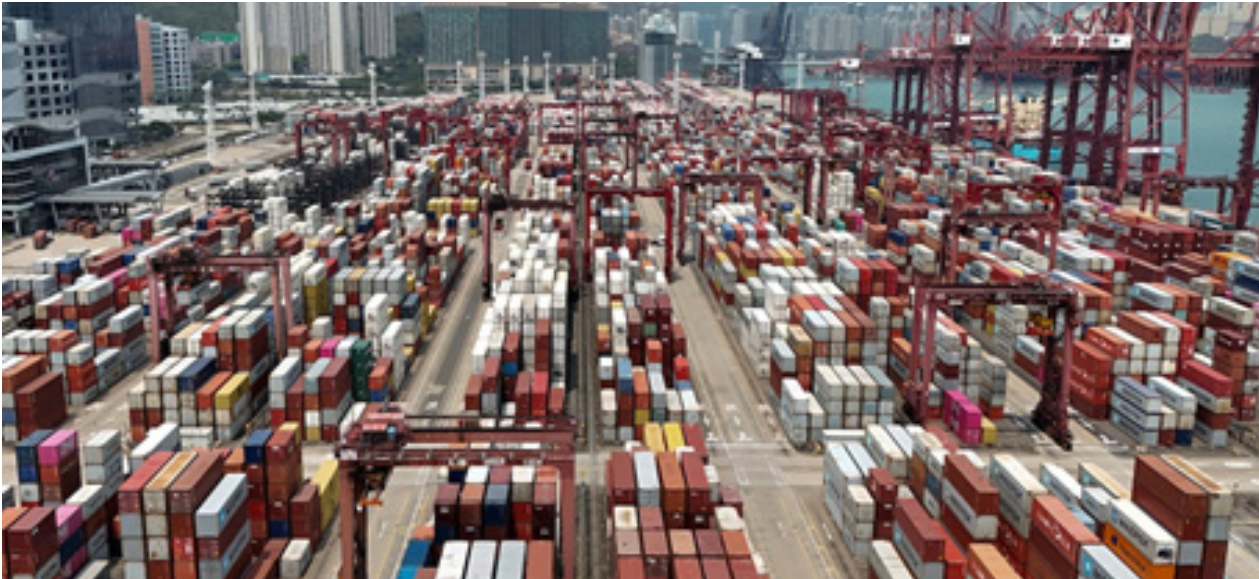


the revival plan. Citi has given a sell rating to Aditya Birla Passion with a target price of Rs 260. On the other hand, Morgan Stanley has maintained its underweight rating. UBS has given a sell rating to IndusInd Bank, reducing its target price to Rs 600 from Rs 770. The Union Cabinet has approved railway projects worth Rs 8,741 crore in Chhattisgarh. UBS has given a buy rating to Bank of Baroda with a target price of Rs 290. The price of Brent crude oil has fallen to \$ 68 per barrel. 19 lakh shares have changed

Rupee strengthened by 21 paise to settle at 85.23 against the dollar. HUDCO approved a mobilization of Rs. 65 thousand crore in FY26. Borrowing limit increased to Rs. 2.5 lakh crore. Go First Airlines is forced to sell its assets after NCLAT rejected

hands in Tata Steel. Adani Group has approved raising Rs 6500 crore in the form of loans in FY26. HDFC Bank's loans have risen by 5.4% and deposits by 15.8%. CLSA has given a buy rating to Federal Bank with a target price of Rs. 230.

China strikes back with 34% tariffs on all US Goods



China has announced sweeping retaliatory tariffs of 34% on all US imports starting April 10, in response to President Donald Trump's latest round of steep duties on Chinese products. The move marks a significant escalation in the ongoing trade war between the world's two largest economies.

The counter-tariff, mirroring Trump's so-called "reciprocal" duties, is part of a broader package of measures unveiled by Beijing on Thursday, including export controls on critical materials and sanctions on American companies. Chinese authorities said the decision was aimed at "protecting national economic interests and responding proportionately."

Among the key measures China unveiled:

- A 34% tariff on all US goods, matching US rates on Chinese imports.
- Immediate export restrictions on seven types of rare earth materials critical to global electronics and defense industries.
- Launch of an anti-dumping investigation into US and Indian exports of CT X-ray tubes.
- Suspension of poultry imports from two major US producers.
- Inclusion of 11 American defense companies in the "unreliable entity list."
- Export controls imposed on 16 US firms.
- A ban on sorghum imports from a key US supplier.

The Chinese announcement came during a public

holiday, underscoring the urgency and coordination behind the measures. "The speed in which the counter measures were rolled out shows a high level of deliberation and a suite of appropriate responses to hit back at the US," said Dylan Loh, assistant professor at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University. "It strikes the balance between inflicting pain but not being seen as an overreaction."

Trump's new tariffs, introduced earlier this week, aim to raise levies on nearly all Chinese products to 54%, a historic high. He justified the action by citing China's alleged role in the fentanyl crisis and the need to balance trade terms with US partners. However, the move has reignited fears of a full-blown trade war, sending shockwaves through global markets.

Following China's announcement, European stocks plunged, with key indices nearing correction territory. In the US, futures on the S&P 500 slid by 2.2% in early trading, while Treasury yields fell sharply, reflecting a flight to safety. Commodities markets also reacted swiftly: soybean futures dropped 2%, while wheat and corn fell over 1%. Analysts warn that with Trump yet to speak to Chinese President Xi Jinping since returning to the White House, the lack of diplomatic engagement could worsen the standoff. In 2023, China imported \$164 billion worth of American goods, the lowest in four years—a figure likely to fall further under the new tariffs.

‘This is not a startup’: Piyush Goyal slams billionaire kids’ ice cream ventures

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Minister Piyush Goyal sparked a debate on India's startup culture during his address at the Startup Mahakumbh 2025 event, where he strongly criticized the trend of wealthy business families launching niche ice cream and cookie brands and labeling them as "startups." Goyal argued that such ventures, though successful, lack the technological ambition needed for India's future.

"Fancy ice cream and cookies. I know at least three or four billionaires whose children make one brand or the other, very fancy ice cream and cookies, and run a very successful business," said Goyal. "And I have no complaint against that. But is that the destiny of India? Is the future of India satisfied with that?"

Goyal's comments were pointed, targeting a growing trend of branding lifestyle and food ventures as high-impact startups. He criticized the liberal use of buzzwords such as "healthy," "vegan," "gluten-free," and "zero" in marketing such products as innovative startups. "Using these terms and good packaging, they call themselves a startup. This is not a startup, it's entrepreneurship. This is business," Goyal stated firmly. He emphasized that India's real growth lies in areas like semiconductors and artificial intelligence, which can shape the future of the country and help it compete globally. "We are investing heavily in becoming self-reliant, building chips and AI models which will prepare the nation for the future," he said. In a sharp rhetorical jab, Goyal asked, "What should India do? Make ice cream or semicon-

ductor chips?"

His remarks ignited reactions across the startup ecosystem. Aadit Palicha, co-founder and CEO of Zepto, came to the defense of Indian consumer-facing startups. In a social media post, he highlighted the significant contributions these companies make to the economy.

"It is easy to criticise consumer internet start-



ups in India, especially when you compare them to the deep technical excellence being built in US/China," said Palicha. He noted that Zepto alone brings in over ₹1,000 crore in annual tax revenue, draws billions in foreign direct investment, and has strengthened India's backend supply chains.

Palicha added, "If that isn't a miracle in Indian innovation, I honestly don't know what is."

As the debate over what defines a "true startup" continues, Goyal's remarks have reignited conversations about the direction of India's entrepreneurial ecosystem and the need to focus on deep-tech for national progress.

Oil plunges to four-year low amid tariff turmoil

Global oil prices crashed to their lowest levels in four years as a double shock from a surprise output hike by OPEC+ and a fresh wave of tariffs between the US and China sent energy and commodities markets into a tailspin. Benchmark Brent crude has dropped 14% in just two days, plunging below \$65 per barrel, while US crude futures have fallen to their lowest since 2021.

The sharp slide began Thursday after US President Donald Trump announced sweeping new tariffs targeting major trade partners, raising fears of a global economic slowdown and weakening oil demand. The rout deepened Friday after China retaliated by announcing a 34% tariff on all US imports effective April 10.

Compounding the market turmoil, OPEC+ stunned traders late Thursday by tripling its planned production hike for May. Delegates within the group described the move as a strategic decision aimed at forcing discipline among member countries that had been exceeding their production quotas. The output surge has raised questions about the bloc's commitment to supporting higher prices.



The result has been a steep selloff not only in oil, but across a broad spectrum of commodities. Copper dropped as much as 5.1% to its lowest level since January, and European natural gas futures slumped nearly 10%. Major mining firms were also hit hard: Glencore Plc shares fell 11%, while BHP Group and Rio Tinto Group posted significant

losses.

The unexpected output decision by OPEC+ marks a major shift in strategy after months of curbing supply to support prices. Analysts say the group's move could be aimed at regaining control of the market by undercutting overproducers, even at the cost of short-term price pain.

"The dual blow from OPEC+ and the trade war has jolted the oil market out of its recent trading band," said one analyst. "It's clear that both supply and demand risks are mounting."

Wall Street has responded with swift revisions to oil forecasts. Goldman Sachs and ING Groep NV are among the institutions lowering their price targets, citing demand concerns and rising supply. The developments come at a critical time for the global economy, which is already struggling with inflationary pressures and weakening consumer sentiment. The renewed volatility in oil prices is expected to ripple through energy markets and could complicate monetary policy decisions in the coming months.

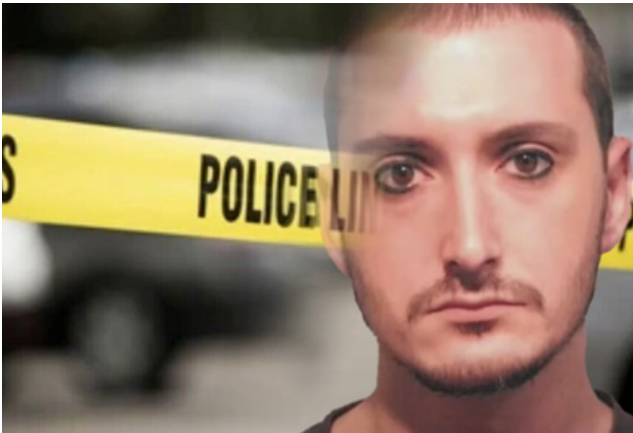
Mystery Account ‘JosD92’ Takes IPL 2025 Internet by Storm



A mysterious online persona, JosD92, has captivated the IPL 2025 digital community with a bizarre yet intriguing obsession—Hindi commentary and MS Dhoni. The enigmatic account has gained viral status on platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and YouTube, leaving cricket fans both

amused and bewildered. JosD92’s strategy is simple but effective—they frequently join IPL live-streams, particularly on popular YouTube channels like ‘Sports Yaari’, and purchase Super Chats to have their comments read aloud by the hosts. These comments, almost always centered around Hindi commentary and Dhoni, have sparked curiosity about the real identity and motives behind the account. The repetitive nature of JosD92’s messages, coupled with their willingness to spend money just to be heard, has made them a viral phenomenon. Some speculate that JosD92 is a Dhoni superfan, while others joke that it could be a social experiment or an elaborate marketing gimmick. As IPL 2025 progresses, JosD92’s legend continues to grow, with fans eagerly anticipating their next Super Chat message. Whether it’s sheer passion or a well-orchestrated digital stunt, one thing is certain—JosD92 has made their mark on IPL’s online landscape.

New Jersey Janitor Jailed for Food Contamination



A former elementary school janitor in New Jersey has been sentenced to eight years in prison after admitting to contaminating students’ food with human fluids and faeces. The shocking case, which unfolded at Elizabeth F. Moore School in Bridgeton, has sparked outrage, with authorities confirming that the 27-year-old culprit, Giovanni Impellizzeri, will serve at least five years before becoming eligible for parole. According to reports from the New York Post and

NBC Philadelphia, Impellizzeri was also charged with possession of child sexual abuse material. His January confession included third-degree possession of child sexual abuse material and second-degree official misconduct, leading to the harsh sentencing. The Cumberland County Prosecutor’s Office detailed the disturbing case in a press release, revealing that Impellizzeri’s crimes came to light after investigators obtained footage of him engaging in inappropriate acts within the school premises. Further inquiry into his phone data uncovered additional unsettling videos and messages, intensifying the case against him. The incident has raised alarms over school safety and background checks for employees, with many parents and community members demanding stricter hiring regulations in educational institutions. Authorities have assured the public that new measures will be considered to prevent such horrific violations in the future. Meanwhile, the case has ignited nationwide discussions on school security, staff oversight, and the need for stringent surveillance in environments involving children.

Vietnamese Man’s 5-Month Headache Reveals Shocking Cause



A bizarre medical case from Vietnam has left people stunned after a 35-year-old man suffering from severe headaches for five months discovered that a pair of chopsticks had been lodged in his brain. The man, whose identity has not been disclosed, had been relying on painkillers to manage his condition, but over time, his symptoms worsened—his vision began deteriorating, and he noticed a watery discharge from his nose. Concerned, he rushed to the Cuba Friend-

ship Hospital in Dong Hoi, Quang Binh province, where doctors conducted a CT scan that revealed a shocking discovery. The scan showed that the man’s brain was filling with air, a rare and dangerous condition known as tension pneumocephalus. Even more shocking was the presence of two broken chopsticks extending from his nose to his brain. Despite experiencing months of pain and discomfort, the man had no memory of how the chopsticks ended up inside his head. After further questioning, doctors speculated that he might have suffered a drunken altercation months ago, where he was possibly stabbed in the face with chopsticks but did not recall the incident. To save his life, doctors performed a complex endoscopic surgery through his nose, carefully removing the chopsticks and closing the hole in his brain. The case has gone viral on social media, shocking netizens and sparking discussions about how such an injury could go unnoticed for so long. Medical experts say this rare case highlights the importance of seeking immediate medical attention for persistent, unexplained symptoms, as what seems like a common headache could sometimes indicate a far more serious underlying condition.

Canada’s ‘Snake Honeymoon Spot’ Draws 75,000 Garter Snakes Yearly

Every spring, Narcisse, Manitoba, transforms into the world’s largest snake mating ground, drawing over 75,000 red-sided garter snakes in a dramatic courtship spectacle. This unique event, which attracts biologists and tourists alike, sees male snakes swarming around female snakes in a fascinating ritual known as the ‘mating ball’. The mating frenzy occurs in limestone dens, where the snakes hibernate during the winter and emerge as temperatures rise. The male garter

snakes outnumber the females, leading to intense competition as they coil around a single female, attempting to impress her. While the sight of thousands of writhing snakes might sound terrifying to some, it has become a major tourist attraction, with visitors gathering to witness nature’s most extraordinary reptilian love fest. This event is not just about spectacle; scientists study the behavior, pheromones, and survival strategies of these snakes, providing insights into reptilian mating

habits. Despite its eerie appearance, the Narcisse Snake Dens offer a rare glimpse into nature’s most astonishing mating rituals, making it a must-visit destination for wildlife enthusiasts and thrill-seekers alike.



ChatGPT Sparks Aadhaar, PAN Card Controversy

OpenAI’s artificial intelligence chatbot ChatGPT has once again found itself at the center of controversy after several social media users claimed it was generating fake Aadhaar and PAN cards, sparking serious security concerns. The AI tool, which recently gained popularity for its Studio Ghibli-style image generator, has been widely used by millions of users to create and share visually appealing artwork. However, its image generation capabilities are now under scrutiny, with many demanding stricter AI regulations to prevent misuse. Reports surfaced online showing purported screenshots of fake Indian identity documents allegedly created using ChatGPT’s image tools. These claims have triggered widespread debate on AI ethics, data security, and regulatory frameworks. Several users have expressed concerns that such capabilities could lead to identity fraud, financial crimes, and privacy violations. In response, AI experts and cybersecurity



analysts have urged tech companies to implement stronger safeguards to prevent misuse of AI-generated content. While OpenAI has not officially confirmed whether ChatGPT can create authentic-looking Aadhaar or PAN cards, past incidents highlight the potential risks associated with unrestricted AI-generated images. Regulatory authorities in India are now facing growing pressure to closely monitor AI developments, ensuring that such technologies do

not compromise national security or public trust. This incident also underscores the urgent need for global AI governance, as concerns over deepfakes, misinformation, and data security continue to rise. Amidst the uproar, calls for stricter AI legislation have intensified, with experts stressing that companies must establish clear ethical guidelines to prevent AI from being misused for fraudulent activities.

American CEO Allegedly Chokes Cruise Passenger Over Wife’s Insult



A luxury cruise turned chaotic when Kenneth DeGiorgio, CEO of First American Financial, was accused of choking a fellow passenger after a heated altercation over footwear etiquette in a cocktail lounge. The incident took place aboard a Virgin Voyages cruise, where DeGiorgio’s wife, Nichol DeGiorgio, reportedly asked another pas-

senger, identified as MA, to wear shoes while dancing. In response, MA allegedly hurled an expletive-laden insult at her, triggering the confrontation. According to eyewitnesses, an enraged Kenneth DeGiorgio approached MA and grabbed him by the neck, escalating the situation into a physical altercation. Some reports also claim that DeGiorgio threatened to kill MA during the attack. Security footage from the ship captured MA struggling to maintain his balance as DeGiorgio allegedly choked him. Following the incident, cruise security intervened, and the ship’s captain ordered DeGiorgio to remain confined to his cabin for the remainder of the journey. No official charges have been reported yet, but the altercation has sparked discussions online about the conduct of high-profile executives in public spaces. While Virgin Voyages has not issued a statement, sources suggest that legal action could follow if MA decides to press charges. The incident has also raised concerns about passenger safety on luxury cruises, where such outbursts can quickly turn violent.

Man Slams Schools Over Costly Textbooks



A recent viral video on social media has ignited debate over the exorbitant prices of school textbooks, with a concerned citizen calling out private schools for ignoring the New Education Policy (NEP) and placing unnecessary financial strain on parents. The man, in the widely shared clip, criticizes educational institutions for acting like “shopping malls” by charging as much as ₹6,000 for textbooks, making school bags heavier while adding to the financial stress of families already struggling with rising costs of essentials. One of the key concerns raised is that schools are blatantly disregarding the NEP’s principles, which emphasize “One Nation, One Class, One Curriculum, One Publication.” Despite this directive aimed at standardizing education and reducing the financial burden on students and parents, many private in-

stitutions continue to push expensive textbooks instead of adopting more affordable, government-approved alternatives. The issue has sparked widespread discussion online, with many parents sharing similar experiences and questioning the lack of regulation in textbook pricing. Critics argue that schools have turned education into a business, prioritizing profits over accessibility. Some have even called for strict government intervention to ensure that private institutions adhere to NEP guidelines and prevent exploitation. As the debate intensifies, education officials are facing growing pressure to enforce policies that promote affordability and fairness in school education. Whether this outcry will lead to actual reforms remains to be seen, but the frustration among parents and students is undeniably mounting.

Lucknow Super Giants Secure 12-Run Victory Over Mumbai Indians



Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) defeated Mumbai Indians (MI) by 12 runs in an exciting IPL 2025 clash held at the Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium. Batting first, LSG set a challenging target of 203 for 8 in 20 overs, powered by remarkable half-centuries from Aiden Markram and Mitchell Marsh.

Mumbai Indians, chasing 204, made a spirited effort with strong performances from Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma. Despite their resilience, MI could only reach 191 for 5 by the end

of their innings. The match saw an interesting strategic move when Tilak Varma retired out in the final over, allowing a more aggressive batsman to attempt scoring quick runs.

The victory strengthens LSG's position in the IPL 2025 standings, showcasing their competitive form and effective strategies. Fans enjoyed a thrilling contest between the two teams, with LSG emerging as the superior side in a high-scoring encounter.

Pranavi Tied-4th Amid Weather Halt in Joburg Ladies Open



India's Pranavi Urs was in superb form at the Joburg Ladies Open before play was suspended due to a flooded course at Modderfontein Golf

Club. Sitting T-4 at 5-under through 13 holes, she trails leader Mimi Rhodes (-8), who completed her round.

Pranavi bounced back from an opening bogey on the 10th with six birdies before suspension. Meanwhile, Diksha Dagar carded 71 to finish T-21.

Other Indians struggled: Avani Prashanth and Tvesa Malik shot 77 each, placing T-107. Rhodes, fresh from her LET win in Australia, leads with a bogey-free 65. Cassandra Alexander (-7) and Shannon Tan (-6) follow closely.

Play resumes tomorrow with eight groups, including Pranavi's, yet to finish. Urs is well-positioned to challenge for the lead once play resumes.

Rahi Sarnobat Triumphs with Gold After Battling Neuropathic Pain

Two-time Olympian Rahi Sarnobat made a remarkable comeback, clinching gold in the Women's 25m Air Pistol at the National Games 2025 in Dehradun. The 34-year-old shooter overcame neuropathic pain syndrome, a debilitating condition that left her bedridden in 2022.

In a heartfelt interview, Rahi shared how she battled chronic pain, extreme fatigue, and de-

pression, unable to live a normal life for months. With help from neurologists and physiotherapists, her first step to recovery was simply sitting up to watch TV.

Her return was fueled by inner strength, not just sporting ambition. "This time, I wasn't aiming for a comeback in sport—I was fighting to come back to life," she said.

Now, Rahi shoots with renewed

focus, aiming not to prove herself, but to explore her untapped potential and inspire others.



Chirag Advances, Prajwal-Nitin Reach Doubles Final



India's Chirag Duhan stormed into his maiden ITF M25 singles semifinal with a 6-2, 7-6(1) win

over Ishaque Egbal in Bengaluru. The 21-year-old now faces top seed Jay Clarke, who beat Karan Singh in straight sets.

In doubles, SD Prajwal Dev and Nitin Kumar Sinha cruised into the final after a 6-0, 7-6(5) win over Parikshit Somani and Manish Sureshkumar. They'll face Nick Chappell (USA) and Grigoriy Lomakin (KAZ), who crushed Aryan Shah/Karan Singh 6-1, 6-0 in the semis.

Elsewhere, Oliver Crawford and Ryuki Matsuda also advanced to the singles semis. Meanwhile, Indian pair Somani-Manish stunned top seeds Adil Kalyanpur/Kody Pearson in the quarters before falling in the semis.

All eyes are now on Chirag's revenge clash with Clarke and the Indo-foreign doubles final showdown.

Yuva Yoddhas Storm into Final, Set Up Title Clash with Jaipur Pink Cubs

Yuva Yoddhas cruised into the Yuva All Stars Championship 2025 final with a commanding 39-24 victory over Warriorz KC in the semifinal. The Uttar Pradesh-based team dominated from the start, securing a 6-0 lead and inflicting two All-Outs by halftime (22-9). Shivam Singh shined as the Best Raider with 10 points, while Ravi was named Best Defender with seven tackle points.

The Yoddhas will now face Jaipur Pink Cubs, who have beaten them three times this season, including two wins in the best-of-three head-to-head round.

Jaipur topped Pool A with 80 points, while Yoddhas led Pool B with 65 points.

The high-stakes final promises a thrilling showdown, with Yoddhas seeking revenge and Jaipur aiming for a clean sweep.



MI New York Sign Star Players for MLC 2025



MI New York have announced a powerhouse-packed squad for Major League Cricket 2025, set to begin on June 13. The team has roped in international stars Quinton de Kock, George Linde, Michael Bracewell, Naveen-ul-Haq, and Azmatullah Omarzai.

They join retained overseas players Kieron Pollard, Nicholas Pooran, Rashid Khan, and Trent Boult, along with key domestic names like Monank Patel and Heath Richards.

MI New York, who were eliminated in the 2024 playoffs by Texas Super Kings, are eyeing a strong comeback with this revamped squad. De Kock returns to the MI family, while Linde and Omarzai bring SA20 title-winning momentum from MI Cape Town.

The franchise released stars like Rabada and Nortje ahead of this season. With a balanced mix of experience and fresh talent, MI New York aim for their second MLC title.

HIL 2024-25 Returns with a Blockbuster Season, Crosses 41 Million Viewers

The return of the Hockey India League (HIL) in 2024-25 has been a resounding success, captivating over 40.8 million viewers across



India. This edition marked a historic milestone with the inaugural women's league, achieving near gender parity in viewership. While 44 men's matches drew 32.9 million, the 13 women's games attracted an impressive 15.1 million—a massive stride in Indian sports broadcasting.

Riding on the post-Olympics hockey wave, the league saw global viewership from 18 countries and over 1 billion digital views across social platforms. The HIL's revival aligns with Indian hockey's centenary and Olympic medal success, further fueling the sport's resurgence.

Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey lauded the fan response, vowing continued efforts to elevate the game. The league's impact cements its role in shaping India's modern hockey era.



Vijay Deverakonda's Bold Take on Bollywood Decline



Telugu star Vijay Deverakonda made bold remarks on Bollywood's current slump, stating that the industry is facing tough times but will regain its past glory soon. In a recent interview, Vijay said Bollywood has been struggling to deliver major hits in recent years, while South

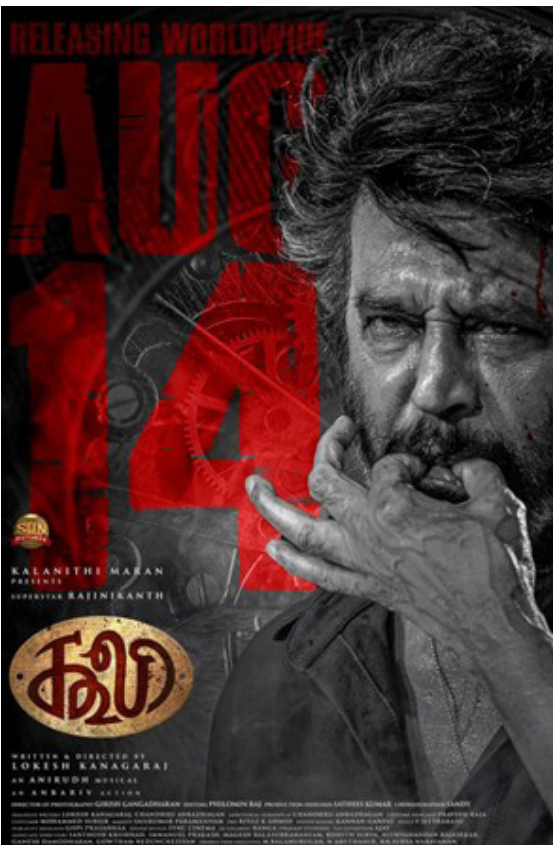
Indian films have seen a massive rise in popularity across the country and globally. He emphasized that the Telugu film industry's success is a result of years of hard work and creativity. Commenting on the growing gap in Bollywood, he added that new-age filmmakers—mostly from out-

side Mumbai—are likely to fill the creative void. Deverakonda also noted how North Indian audiences are now more interested in watching South Indian films, a shift from the past when such content received little recognition. He believes Bollywood's revival will come through fresh talent.

Rajinikanth's Coolie Set for August 14 Release

Superstar Rajinikanth is all set to return to the big screen with *Coolie*, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj. The film's release date has officially been confirmed—*Coolie* will hit theatres worldwide on August 14, as announced by production house Sun Pictures through a post on X (formerly Twitter). The combination of Rajinikanth and Lokesh has created massive buzz across industries, with fans eagerly awaiting this high-octane entertainer. Lokesh, known for his gripping

storytelling and strong youth connect, enjoys a cult following even in Telugu-speaking states. Adding to the excitement, *Coolie* will also feature cameo appearances by stars like Akkineni Nagarjuna, Upendra, and Aamir Khan, raising expectations sky-high. With such a powerful cast and crew, *Coolie* is poised to become one of the biggest pan-India releases of the year. The countdown to Thalaivar's action-packed return begins!



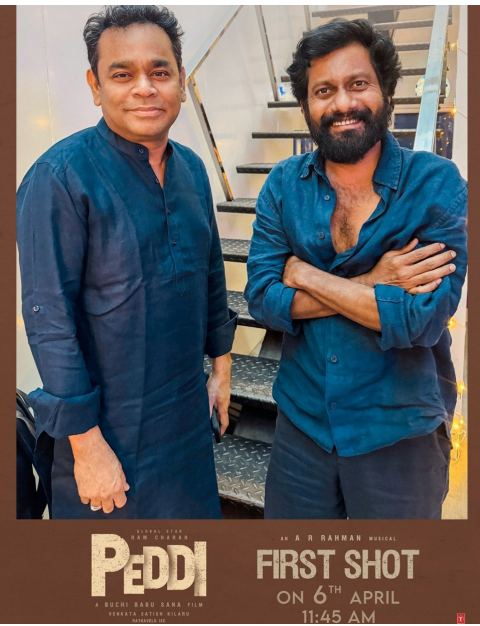
Dhanush's Idly Kadai Locks October 1 Release Date

Dhanush's upcoming directorial *Idly Kadai* has officially locked October 1 as its new release date. The announcement came with a festive new poster featuring Dhanush in a traditional look, joyfully dancing amid a crowd. Originally slated for April 10, the film was postponed to avoid clashing with Ajith Kumar's *Good Bad Ugly*. Set in a rural backdrop, the emotionally rich drama marks Dhanush's fourth directorial after *Pa Paandi*, *Raayan*, and *Nilavukku En Mel Enna-*

di Kobam. He stars alongside Nithya Menen, reuniting after their acclaimed performance in *Thiruchitrabalam*. The film also features Arun Vijay, Shalini Pandey, Prakash Raj, and Rajkiran. Produced by Wunderbar Films and Dawn Pictures, it will be distributed by Red Giant Movies. The crew includes GV Prakash Kumar (music), Kiran Koushik (cinematography), and Prasanna GK (editing).

Peddi Glimpse Set for Release on April 6

Excitement builds for *Peddi*, starring Global Star Ram Charan



and directed by Buchi Babu Sana, as makers announce the release of its much-awaited glimpse titled *First Shot* on April 6, marking Sri Rama Navami. The announcement comes days after the film's title and intense first-look poster were unveiled on Charan's birthday, March 27. Adding to the buzz, music maestro A.R. Rahman has completed the audio mixing for the glimpse, heightening anticipation among fans. The glimpse will drop at 11:45 AM on Sunday, giving Mega fans plenty to celebrate this festive season. *Peddi* marks the first collaboration between Charan and Uppena director Buchi Babu Sana and promises a mass entertainer with powerful visuals and music. With Rahman on board, expectations are sky-high for this rural action drama.

Veteran Actor-Director Manoj Kumar Passes Away at 87

Legendary actor and filmmaker Manoj Kumar, fondly known as Bharat Kumar for his patriotic films, passed away at the age of 87 in Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital early Friday morning. The iconic figure had been battling decompensated liver cirrhosis and succumbed to cardiogenic shock following an acute myocardial infarction. Admitted on February 21, 2025, Manoj Kumar had been under medical care for several weeks. "He passed away peacefully at around 3:30 AM due to age-related complications," said Dr. Santosh Shetty, CEO of the hospital. Born Harikrishan Goswami in Amritsar on July 24, 1937, Manoj Kumar earned nationwide admiration for his patriotic-themed films like *Shaheed*, *Upkar*, and *Purab Aur Paschim*. His on-screen persona earned him the enduring title 'Bharat Kumar'. Tributes poured in from across the nation, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi mourning the loss, calling him an icon who ignited national pride through cinema. Apart from acting, he was a celebrated director of hits

like *Kranti* and *Roti Kapda Aur Makaaan*. Later, he joined politics and became a member of the BJP. Manoj Kumar's legacy remains a cornerstone of Indian cinema, forever etched in the hearts of millions.



Disha Patani Not Part of Prabhas's 'Fauji', Confirms Production

Rumours of Disha Patani starring alongside Prabhas in the upcoming period drama *Fauji* have been officially dismissed. The film, directed by Sita Ramam fame Hanu Raghavapudi, will feature Imanvi Esmail as the sole female lead, marking her Telugu debut. The production team clarified they never approached Disha and confirmed there's no second female lead. *Fauji* promises to showcase Prabhas in a fresh, emotionally intense role,

blending themes of love, war, and sacrifice. Producer Ravi Yerneni shared that filming is progressing rapidly, with a strong belief in the film's blockbuster potential. The cast includes industry veterans like Anupam Kher, Jaya Prada, and Mithun Chakraborty. Meanwhile, Disha was last seen in Tamil hit *Kanguva* and will next appear in *Welcome to the Jungle* with Akshay Kumar and Sanjay Dutt.