

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

t°

H 33° C

L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

t°

H 35° C

L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

t°

H 36° C

L 26° C

CM Siddaramaiah Reaffirms Commitment to Public Health and Civic Workers' Welfare



On World Health Day, CM reiterates focus on building a healthy and strong Karnataka
Announces permanent jobs for contract civic workers and waste disposal drivers from May 1
State budget prioritizes hospitals, free and affordable care, and mother-child health

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka
On the occasion of World Health Day, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah declared the state government's firm commitment to building a "Healthy Society – Strong Karnataka" through progressive healthcare reforms and welfare initiatives for civic workers.
CM Siddaramaiah emphasized that a healthy population is the foundation of a prosperous state. He highlighted that the government is giving high priority to the health sector, launching bold steps to transform public healthcare delivery. These include the construction of well-equipped hospitals, deployment of cutting-edge medical technologies,

provision of free and affordable treatment for critical illnesses, and special attention to maternal and child healthcare.
In the current year's budget, several initiatives have been introduced to enhance quality of life and ensure inclusive healthcare access across all regions and social strata. Siddaramaiah urged people to recognize health as a blessing and reaffirmed his administration's commitment to providing a dignified and comfortable life to all citizens.
Underscoring the government's commitment to labor welfare, the Chief Minister announced a landmark decision to be implemented on May 1, International Labour Day. The state will regularize the services of contract-based municipal workers and drivers of waste disposal vehicles, ensuring job security and dignity for thousands of families. He called this move a historic step toward labor empowerment.
Referring to the teachings of 12th-century social reformer Basavanna, Siddaramaiah noted that civic workers live the ideal of "Kayakave Kailasa" (work is divine), and affirmed that all forms of service — whether by a chief secretary or a sanitation worker — are equally sacred and essential to society. Through these combined efforts in health and labor, the government aims to build a more just, equitable, and resilient Karnataka.



Dy CM DKS Reviews Progress of Key Projects in Bengaluru Urban District

Deputy CM held review meeting with officials at Bengaluru Urban District Collector's Office
Assessed progress of infrastructure and development works in the city
Emphasized timely completion and coordination among departments

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister DK Shivakumar conducted a high-level progress review meeting on Monday at the District Collector's Office Hall, focusing on ongoing development projects across the Bengaluru Urban District.
During the meeting, DK Shivakumar reviewed the status of several key infrastructure and civic initiatives currently underway

in the region. He assessed the pace of project implementation, identified bottlenecks, and directed officials to ensure timely completion without compromising on quality.
The Deputy CM emphasized the importance of inter-departmental coordination and accountability in accelerating the city's development. He urged officials to prioritize people-centric outcomes and ensure that infrastructure works contribute to the broader vision of transforming Bengaluru into a more livable, efficient, and modern city.
The meeting was attended by senior officers from the BBMP, BWSSB, BESCOM, BDA, and other civic agencies, who provided updates on various sectors including roadworks, drainage systems, housing, water supply, and electrification projects.
DK Shivakumar reiterated the government's commitment to fast-tracking urban development and addressing citizens' concerns proactively. He instructed district-level officers to regularly monitor field progress and remove administrative hurdles that delay projects.
The Deputy CM assured that the government is working with a clear roadmap to elevate Bengaluru's infrastructure and civic standards to meet the growing demands of the city's residents.

'Wow.. Modi ji wow': Kharge Slams Modi Govt Over Soaring Fuel Prices, LPG Woes

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi
Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday launched a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the NDA government over the steep fuel prices and the rising burden on the poor, despite a significant fall in international crude oil prices.
Taking to 'X' (formerly Twitter), Kharge began his post with a sarcastic "Wow.. Modi ji wow", expressing outrage over the Centre's failure to pass on the benefits of reduced crude prices to citizens.
"International crude oil prices have fallen by 41 percent compared to May 2014. But instead of reducing petrol and diesel prices, your exploitative government has increased the central excise duty by ₹2 each," he said.
Kharge didn't stop at fuel. He also highlighted the struggles faced by poor households due to the shortage and price hike of LPG cylinders. "There is now a shortage of LPG cylinders, Modi ji... this time the whip of inflation also fell on the savings of the poor women of 'Ujjwala'," he added, referring to the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.
The Congress leader accused the



Modi government of betraying the poor, saying it has become synonymous with "looting, extortion, and fraud." He said the government's policies are pushing the middle class and poor further into financial distress.
As election season draws closer, Kharge's sharp comments underline the Congress party's strategy to corner the ruling BJP on economic issues like fuel prices and inflation, which directly impact everyday lives.
He ended his post by urging citizens to hold the government accountable for their "anti-people" policies.

VHP to Stage Statewide Protest on April 8 Against Muslim Reservation in Govt Contracts

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has announced a statewide protest on Tuesday, April 8, against the Karnataka government's move to grant a four per cent reservation to Muslims under category 2B in government civil work and service contracts. The organization has called the decision "unconstitutional" and an example of "appeasement politics."
In a statement released on Monday, the VHP strongly condemned the bill introduced by the Karnataka Government in the Legislative Assembly, which amends the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements (KTTP) Act to include reservation for Muslims in specific contracts. The amendment allows up to 4% reser-



vation in civil work contracts worth up to ₹2 crore and in goods/services contracts up to ₹1 crore for Muslims under the 2B category.
"This decision, based solely on religion, violates the secular principles enshrined in Article 15 of the Constitution, which prohibits discrimina-

tion on the basis of religion," the VHP said. The organization accused the state government of pushing forward the bill for political gain, calling it a move driven by vote bank considerations.
VHP announced that demonstrations will be organized across all districts in Karnataka to oppose the decision. In Bengaluru, the protest is scheduled at Freedom Park at 4 PM on Tuesday. The BJP has also announced a parallel 16-day agitation starting Monday, opposing both the reservation and the rising cost of living in the state.
The VHP called on citizens to participate in the protests to "safeguard constitutional values" and demand the withdrawal of the reservation policy based on religion.



Ranya Rao Gold Smuggling Case: Sessions Court Denies Bail to Tarun Raju

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
In a major development in the high-profile Ranya Rao gold smuggling case, a Bengaluru sessions court on Monday rejected the bail petition of Tarun Konduru Raju, the second accused in the case.
The CCH64 LXIII Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge delivered the verdict after hearing arguments present-

ed by Raju's legal counsel and reviewing the objections submitted by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).
Raju, 36, was apprehended by the DRI on March 9, six days after Kannada actress Ranya Rao was allegedly caught red-handed at Kempegowda

CM Siddaramaiah Assures Rahul Gandhi of Holistic Support for Karnataka’s Street Vendors

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has assured Congress leader Rahul Gandhi that the state government is committed to the holistic development of street vendors, following a letter from Gandhi expressing concern over their condition in the state. In his response, Siddaramaiah stated that Karnataka was among the first states to frame Street Vendors Rules, a move initiated during his earlier tenure as Chief Minister between 2013 and 2018. He pointed out that street vendor surveys and Town Vending Committee (TVC) elections were first carried out in 2017 and 2019, respectively, under the previous Congress-led administration. Though the process was due to repeat in 2022, it was left incomplete. Upon the Congress party’s return to power, the survey was resumed under the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, registering 27,655 street vendors in Bengaluru alone. The CM confirmed that elections to TVCs will be completed in April 2025, and 189 vending zones have been identified, housing 10,142 designated vending spots. These zones aim to bring organization and dignity to the informal sector, while reducing harassment



and uncertainty for vendors. Siddaramaiah also elaborated on a series of welfare initiatives aimed at empowering vendors, including support in education for their children, healthcare access, housing, and skill development. To enhance mobility and business potential, the state will provide electric vending vehicles. In the financial year 2024–25, 3,778 beneficiaries have been identified to receive upgraded vending carts. The CM reiterated the government’s focus on creating long-term economic and social security for this vital segment of the informal workforce.

Congress High Command Asks DK Shivakumar to Continue as State President

- Party sources say high command not inclined to replace Shivakumar before December
- Meeting with Rahul Gandhi calms internal tussle within Karnataka Congress
- Cabinet reshuffle not expected soon, MLC candidate selection left to CM and Dy CM

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
In a key development that may temporarily quell factional strife within Karnataka’s ruling Congress, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar has been asked by the party high command to continue as the state party president, according to sources. The decision came after a crucial two-day visit to New Delhi by Shivakumar and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah last Thursday and Friday, during which they met senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. The meeting was seen as significant amidst growing demands from a section of Congress MLAs and ministers — believed to be aligned with Siddaramaiah — seeking Shivakumar’s removal as KPCC chief. Citing the party’s ‘one person, one post’ policy, they argued that Shivakumar, also serving as Deputy CM, is unable to devote adequate time to organisational matters. However, party sources revealed that the Congress leadership appreciated Shivakumar’s contributions in securing a strong victory in the assembly elections, steering the party’s Lok Sabha campaign, and winning all three recent assembly bypolls. As a result, the leadership is reportedly not keen on replac-



ing him, at least until the end of 2025. Rumours have persisted about a silent agreement within the party — that Siddaramaiah would serve the first half of the term as CM, followed by Shivakumar. Though neither leader has confirmed this, ministers close to both camps continue internal lobbying. Discussions during the Delhi visit also included the upcoming MLC elections and controversial honey trap allegations raised recently in the assembly. Rahul Gandhi was reportedly displeased with the manner in which the issue was brought up by Cooperation Minister K.N. Rajanna, who claimed at least 48 MLAs had been targeted. Public Works Minister Satish Jarkiholi had also supported Rajanna’s claims. Meanwhile, party sources clarified that a cabinet reshuffle is not being considered for now. Candidate selection for the MLC polls will be jointly handled by Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar.

‘Such incidents happen in big cities’: Minister Parameshwara’s remark on molestation triggers backlash

- Comment draws criticism after CCTV footage of molestation in Bengaluru goes viral
- Minister defends law enforcement, says legal action will be taken
- Opposition, public call for stronger accountability and sensitivity in statements

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Karnataka Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara has drawn sharp criticism for his response to a molestation incident that occurred in Bharathi Layout, Suddaguntepalya, on April 3. The minister, addressing media on April 7, said, “Such incidents tend to happen here and there in big cities like Bengaluru,” a statement that has since sparked public outrage. The incident, which was captured on CCTV, shows a man stalking two women before molesting and pushing one of them against a wall. The 17-second footage quickly went viral, intensifying calls for justice and accountability. The Suddaguntepalya police have filed a case under the relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS),



including sexual harassment (BNS 75), stalking (BNS 78), and use of criminal force with intent to outrage modesty (BNS 74). In his statement, Minister Parameshwara stressed that he has been issuing daily instructions to the police commissioner to strengthen patrolling and monitoring systems, adding, “The law and order situation is stable in the city... Legal action will be taken in accordance with the law.” However, his “such incidents happen” remark drew backlash from several quarters, including women’s rights activists, opposition leaders, and citizens, who criticized the statement as insensitive and dismissive of women’s safety concerns. Critics demanded that public representatives demonstrate greater empathy and proactive measures rather than normalizing crimes against women. As Bengaluru continues to grapple with rising concerns over urban safety, this incident has reignited the debate over police efficiency, women’s security, and the tone of leadership in addressing gender-based violence.

Karnataka’s Vidhana Soudha to Shine on Weekends and Holidays

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
In a move to enhance the city’s visual appeal and celebrate its architectural grandeur, the Karnataka government has inaugurated a permanent illumination system at the iconic Vidhana Soudha. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah lit up the state’s seat of power on Sunday evening, as the structure radiated the tricolour to the rhythm of traditional music and drumbeats. The illumination will be operational every weekend and on public holidays from 6:30 pm to 10:00 pm. Addressing the gathering, CM Siddaramaiah emphasized the symbolic significance of the building, urging lawmakers to remain committed to delivering justice and inclusive governance for the people of Karnataka. He also lauded Assembly Speaker U T Khader for spearheading the lighting initiative. Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D K Shivakumar, who was also present at the event, announced that the government plans to replicate this aesthetic upgrade across the city. He revealed that 40 locations,



including Metro pillars and heritage buildings, have been identified for illumination. A detailed project report (DPR) has been prepared, and tenders will be floated soon, he added. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Ministers K J George and H K Patil, the CM’s political secretaries K Govindaraju and Naseer Ahmed, Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh, and Additional Chief Secretary L K Atheeq, among others. With this initiative, the government aims to celebrate Karnataka’s heritage, boost tourism, and elevate the capital’s cultural landscape, turning key public spaces into vibrant visual landmarks.

KSEAB to Declare Second PUC Exam–1 Results on April 8th



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) will announce the results of the second PUC Exam-1 on April 8, the board confirmed on Sunday. The results pertain to exams held from March 1 to March 20 this year. Students can access their results on the official KSEAB website — kseeb.karnataka.gov.in — from 1.30 PM onwards. The link to the results will be made available direct-

ly on the homepage of the website. Prior to this, a press conference will be held at 12.30 PM, led by the Minister for School Education and Literacy, during which the results will be formally released. To view their scores, students need to log in using their roll number, registration number, and captcha code. They must also select their respective stream — Science, Commerce, or Arts — to access the correct result. Once logged in, the provisional

scorecard will be displayed on the screen. Students are advised to take a printout of the scorecard for immediate use. The official mark sheets will be distributed through respective schools at a later date. In 2024, the second PUC exams saw 6,81,079 students appear, of whom 5,52,690 cleared the exam, resulting in an 81.15% pass percentage. Similar performance is anticipated this year, with KSEAB aiming for a smoother result declaration process.

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Ranya Rao Gold Smuggling Case: Sessions Court Denies Bail to Tarun Raju

International Airport (KIA) with 14.2 kg of concealed gold valued at ₹12.56 crore. The DRI has accused Raju of being a key link in an international smuggling network, with connections to foreign destinations including Geneva and Bangkok. Officials claim he misused his US citizenship, facilitated the smuggling operation, and poses a serious flight risk. Earlier, a special court for eco-

nomic offences had also denied bail to Raju on similar grounds, noting his suspected involvement in a larger syndicate and the possibility of him absconding if released. With the sessions court upholding the denial, Raju remains in judicial custody as the investigation into one of Karnataka’s most sensational gold smuggling cases continues.

Stormy Weather Forecast for Parts of Karnataka Over Next Two Days

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Parts of Karnataka, including the capital Bengaluru, are expected to witness stormy weather over the next two days, with the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) issuing warnings for thunderstorms, lightning, and winds reaching speeds of up to 40 kmph. The KSNDMC’s latest bulletin highlighted that southern interior districts are likely to experience scattered to widespread moderate rainfall, with a possibility of isolated heavy showers. Cloudy skies and turbulent weather conditions are expected to persist till Monday, accompanied by strong gusts of wind and thunder activity. “Residents are advised to remain indoors during periods of intense weather and avoid unnecessary travel,” KSNDMC officials cautioned, urging people to take standard storm precautions in light of the predicted conditions. Interestingly, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has offered a differing forecast for Bengaluru city, Min-



imum temperatures in the city are expected to hover around 21–22 degrees Celsius, according to IMD officials. Despite the discrepancy in forecasts, authorities have urged residents in vulnerable areas to stay alert, particularly in regions prone to waterlogging or storm damage. Citizens are advised to monitor weather updates closely and follow any advisories issued by district administrations.

Karnataka Minister Urges CSR Support for Children with Ultra-Rare Diseases

- Minister appeals to corporates to adopt one child a year with ₹50 lakh support
- 22 children currently receiving treatment at IGICH under national rare disease scheme
- State has released ₹76 crore so far; more funds sought from Centre

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka's Medical Education and Skill Development Minister Dr. Sharan Prakash Patil has called on corporate houses to step forward under

their CSR initiatives to support children suffering from ultra-rare genetic diseases. He appealed to firms to adopt at least one child per year by contributing ₹50 lakh to ensure uninterrupted access to

life-saving treatment.

Dr. Patil highlighted that hundreds of children across India, particularly in Karnataka, are diagnosed with ultra-rare genetic conditions such as lysosomal storage dis-

orders (LSDs) like Gaucher and Pompe diseases. These treatments often cost between ₹50 lakh and ₹1 crore annually per child, placing immense financial pressure on families and the healthcare system.

Under the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD), the Central Government extends financial assistance for such cases. Since 2016, Bengaluru's Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IG-ICH) has been functioning as one of the 13 Centres of



Excellence for Rare Diseases in the country. The institute is currently treating 22 children, with each receiving ₹50 lakh in allo-

cated support.

So far, the Karnataka government has sanctioned ₹76 crore to IGICH, with proposals for addi-

tional funds pending before the Centre. Dr. Patil has also instructed Dr. K.S. Sanjay, Director of IGICH, to draw from the institute's corpus fund to meet immediate treatment needs.

The minister stressed that while the government continues to extend its support, a sustainable and collaborative model involving private sector participation is the need of the hour to safeguard the lives of children with rare and complex medical needs.

Vijayendra Slams Home Minister's Remarks on Bengaluru Harassment Incident

- BJP chief calls Dr. Parameshwar's response 'irresponsible' and 'insensitive'
- Accuses Congress govt of collapsing law and order across Karnataka
- Demands CM take moral responsibility for rising crimes against women

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A political storm erupted on Monday after Karnataka Home Minister Dr. G. Parameshwar described the recent harassment of a young woman in Bengaluru's BTM Layout as an "isolated incident." His comment sparked outrage, with BJP state president B.Y. Vijayendra lashing out at the Congress government, accusing it of trivializing rising crimes against women.

Dr. Parameshwar had remarked that in a vast city like Bengaluru, "such

incidents happen here and there" and attract attention, but assured that the police were working "tirelessly, regardless of rain or cold."

Reacting strongly, Vijayendra condemned the minister's tone, calling it proof of the government's apathy. "It's shameful that the Home Minister finds nothing special in such violent incidents. This shows how the Congress government has allowed the legal system to collapse completely," he posted on social media.

He added that since the



Congress came to power, there has been a surge in murder, extortion, robbery, and crimes against women, with the administration treating such incidents as routine.

Vijayendra said that calling the public harassment of a woman in broad daylight "common" damages Karnataka's reputation globally. "These are not stray incidents; they are proof of systemic failure. Such words from the Home Minister reflect his incompetence and the government's indifference to women's safety," he

said.

He further demanded that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah step forward and accept moral responsibility for the state's law-and-order failure. "Until this Congress government, which has failed to provide basic safety to women, is removed, people will not feel secure," Vijayendra stated. The BJP leader's remarks reflect growing public concern and political pressure over the worsening safety conditions in the state, particularly for women in urban areas like Bengaluru.

Yatnal Declares: 'No Party Will Come to Power Without Me'

TPN Correspondent | Dharwad

Expelled BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal stirred controversy with a fiery speech at the Sri Ram Jayanti and Shivaji Maharaj Jayantyutsava celebrations held at Bani Oni, Hubballi, declaring that no party can come to power in Karnataka without his support. Reiterating his allegiance to Hindutva, Yatnal said, "I won with Hindu votes and I am ready to give my life for God."

In a provocative tone, Yatnal hinted at forming a new party, while launching sharp attacks on both the Congress and the BJP leadership. "I may have been thrown out by Lingaraja Patil and the BJP's Disciplinary Committee, but BJP is still in my heart," he said. "You can't stop me for six months or six years—when Lok Sabha elections come, everyone will come to my doorstep."



Claiming widespread public support following his expulsion, Yatnal declared, "I have received the blessings of all four sections of society. Whoever speaks for Hindus will be the next Chief Minister. I will become CM in 2028."

He emphasized that Sanatan Dharma is the foundation of Indian civilization and criticized those promoting divisions within Hinduism. "Some are trying to separate Lingayat Dharma. If Sanatan Dharma remains, Vibhuti remains," he said.

The former minister

also took a jibe at the state government over law and order, stating, "If I were Home Minister, I would have sent those who attacked the old Hubballi police station straight to Jannat."

Yatnal's speech blended religious fervor with political ambition, asserting that Ram belongs to all castes and that Hindus must stand united. "There is no India without Ram. Let's rise above differences and make India a Vishwaguru," he concluded, as spiritual leaders and supporters cheered him on.

Greens Rally to Save Bandipur, Demand Night Traffic Ban Remains

TPN Correspondent | Mysuru

Hundreds of wildlife activists, farmers, and nature lovers from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala participated in a protest march and cycle rally, demanding the Karnataka government retain the night traffic ban in Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

Braving the heat, the protesters marched from Kaggaladahundi to Sultan Bathery Road, holding placards that read "Save Bandipur," and urged authorities not to compromise the fragile ecosystem of the Nilgiri biosphere, which spans over 5,500 sq km.

Wildlife photographer Senani stressed that even small species like frogs are at risk due to road-

kills and emphasised the importance of conservation over convenience. Environmentalist Saptha Girish added that the reserve should not be subjected to night traffic or road widening, warning of irreversible ecological damage.

Former Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) Balachandrar noted that while night traffic is banned from 8 PM in other reserves like Nagarahole and MM Hills, Bandipur remains under constant pressure for relaxation, which could threaten its diverse wildlife.

In a memorandum to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and the Park Director, activists cited that between 2004 and 2007, 222 animals, in-



cluding mammals, birds, and reptiles, were killed on NH-766. However, post-ban, only nine roadkills were reported between 2022 and 2024—a 90% reduction.

Concerns over increased poaching were also raised, with incidents from Gudalur and Nilgiris involving armed intrusions from Kerala, where 763 elephants were reportedly lost between

2016 and 2024 due to habitat destruction, electrocution, and poisoning. MLA Ganesh Prasad clarified there was no official move to revoke the ban, calling the reports baseless.

The United Conservation Movement Trust urged the government to continue the restrictions to ensure wildlife safety and protect farming communities in Nanjangud and Gundlupet regions.

"Standing by Yatnal is Upholding the Guru's Legacy": Basavajaya Mrityunjaya Swamiji

TPN Correspondent | Bagalkot

Kudalasangama Peethadhipati Basavajaya Mrityunjaya Swamiji has come out strongly in support of expelled BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, declaring that standing by him is part of upholding the Guru's legacy. The Swamiji termed Yatnal's expulsion from the BJP as unjust and reaffirmed his support ahead of the planned protest scheduled for April 13.

Speaking to the media, Swamiji stated, "Basanagouda Patil Yatnal has fallen victim to a political ruse. Expelling him from the party is not the right course. By standing with him in these difficult times, I am not just

supporting a disciple, but honoring our tradition and values."

He emphasized that providing moral support to someone who is working for the betterment of society is the duty of every spiritual leader. "In Indian culture, standing by a person in distress—especially one who works for the upliftment of society—is considered a sacred responsibility. I am only upholding that value."

Swamiji's vocal backing of Yatnal adds further momentum to the latter's recent assertions of political resurgence. With Yat-



nal indicating the launch of a new political front and repeatedly stating his intent to become Chief Minister in 2028, this open endorsement from a prominent Lingayat seer is seen as politically significant. The April 13 protest is expected to see participation from Yatnal's supporters and community leaders, further solidifying his position as a strong Hindutva voice in Karnataka politics.

World-Famous Vairamudi Brahmotsava Begins Monday in Melukote: DC Outlines Arrangements

TPN Correspondent | Mandya

The renowned Vairamudi Brahmotsava, one of the most celebrated religious events in South India, will begin in grandeur on Monday evening in Melukote, Mandya district.

Deputy Commissioner Dr Kumar stated that all preparations have been completed for the seamless execution of this sacred event, which draws lakhs of devotees every year. Earlier On Monday, the precious Rajamudi and

Vairamudi ornaments, which are adorned with diamonds and revered as divine relics, were ceremoniously taken from the district treasury. The traditional handover took place in the presence of local officials and residents,

signifying the beginning of the festival's key rituals. "These ornaments, to be offered by Goddess Sridevi and Bhudevi, are being transported under tight security and will reach the historic Cheluvananarayan temple

by around 8:30 PM," said the Deputy Commissioner. He added that the Brahmotsava celebrations will begin shortly after their arrival. Melukote has been decked up for the occasion, with elaborate arrangements for crowd man-

agement, drinking water, lighting, and medical assistance. The district administration has also co-ordinated with police and health officials to ensure a peaceful and safe experience for all devotees. The Vairamudi festival holds

immense spiritual significance and is especially known for the grand alankara (decoration) of Lord Cheluvananarayana Swamy with the Vairamudi crown, which is displayed to devotees only once a year during this event.

Molestation in Bengaluru Sparks Outrage

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara has responded to the recent molestation incident in Bengaluru by acknowledging that while the city remains largely peaceful due to active police presence, occasional incidents like this are not uncommon in big cities.

His remarks, made on Monday, followed the molestation of a woman in a secluded part of Suddaguntepalya during the early hours of April 3. According to police reports, two women were walking through Bharathi Layout when an unidentified man approached them, pushed one woman against a wall, molested

her, and fled the scene. The incident has triggered widespread concern, with many questioning the safety of women in India's tech capital.

The Home Minister emphasized that the Bengaluru police are working round-the-clock under all weather conditions, and assured the public that continuous efforts are being made to enhance law enforcement across the city. He stated that he is in daily communication with Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda, giving specific instructions to strengthen the patrolling network and monitoring systems.

Parameshwara particularly stressed the importance of an effective "beat

system" — a structured method of area-wise police patrols — which he said must be implemented with discipline and consistency. He added that action is being taken according to the law and reiterated that police visibility in all areas must be increased to deter criminal activity.

While his comment — "such incidents happen in big cities" — has stirred controversy and criticism on social media for sounding dismissive, Parameshwara defended his position by explaining the complexity of urban crime prevention and the scale of challenges faced by law enforcement in metropolitan areas. He assured that the government remains

committed to ensuring public safety and that measures are constantly being reviewed and upgraded. Meanwhile, the police have registered a case and launched a manhunt to identify and arrest the offender.

The incident has renewed calls from women's rights groups and concerned citizens for more robust safety mechanisms, including improved lighting in deserted areas, increased night-time patrolling, and wider deployment of surveillance cameras.

As public outrage grows, pressure is mounting on the authorities to deliver swift justice and take concrete steps to prevent the recurrence of



such crimes.

The government has assured that the issue

is being treated with utmost seriousness and that maintaining women's

safety remains a top priority in Bengaluru's law enforcement agenda.

Tarun Raju Denied Bail in Smuggling Case

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a significant development in the high-profile Ranya Rao gold smuggling case, a Bengaluru sessions court on Monday rejected the bail plea of Tarun Konduru Raju, the second accused in the case.

The bail application was turned down by the CCH64 LXIII Additional City Civil and Sessions Judge after careful consideration of arguments presented by Raju's legal counsel and the counter-objections filed by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI). Raju, 36, was arrested by DRI officials on March 9, just six days after the sensational arrest of Kannada actress Ranya Rao at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), where she was allegedly caught red-handed with 14.2 kg of concealed gold valued at ₹12.56 crore. The case, which has drawn wide-



spread public and media attention, revolves around what authorities claim to be a well-organized international smuggling racket with multiple players, including individuals with foreign citizenship and cross-border links.

Raju, who holds US citizenship, is accused of playing a key role in facilitating the smuggling operation and has been flagged as a crucial inter-

national contact in the network. The DRI, in its objection to the bail plea, cited multiple reasons for opposing Raju's release.

These include his misuse of US citizenship, previous declarations of gold consignments to Geneva and Bangkok under suspicious circumstances, and the serious concern that he poses a flight risk due to his international mobility. Earlier, a special

court for economic offences had also denied Raju's bail, highlighting the same grounds.

Investigators believe that Raju's connections and his coordination with Ranya Rao indicate deeper involvement in a larger smuggling syndicate. The court, agreeing with the DRI's submission, ruled that granting bail at this stage could hinder the investigation and potentially allow the accused to tamper with evidence or flee the country. The gold smuggling case has not only raised questions about airport security lapses but also spotlighted how celebrity status and foreign links are allegedly being used to mask illicit operations.

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

A grim report submitted by the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) to the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) has revealed that 118 people lost their lives in just six months — from April to October 2024 — due to electrical accidents across the eight districts under Bescom's jurisdiction. This figure is more than double the annual average of 109.5 deaths recorded between 2015-2016 and 2023-2024, making it one of the deadliest years for electrical mishaps.

While Bescom officials attempt to downplay the crisis by attributing it largely to public negligence and unauthorised electricity handling, data suggests otherwise. According to internal figures, 24 accidents were caused by accidental contact with live wires, 7 due to lack of maintenance, 9 from poor supervision, and 10 from snapped conductors — all indicating systemic failures and operational lapses on Bescom's part. The remaining 24 incidents were attributed to miscellaneous factors.

In addition, 61 an-



imal deaths were reported during the same six-month period. A well-placed source within Bescom disclosed that the number of fatalities had already exceeded 150 by February 2025, surpassing the previous high of 136 deaths in 2018-2019. Despite this, Bescom officials maintain that most of these deaths occurred in rural areas and cite illegal practices such as farmers drawing electricity using unauthorized methods as a major contributing factor.

Officials also admitted that several incidents were linked to other government agencies like BBMP, BDA, and BWSSB during infrastructure works. Alarming, even Bescom employees have died while on duty — of-

ten due to bypassing safety measures out of overconfidence or urgency. Residents in Bengaluru, however, are not convinced. Many have expressed concern over the city's deteriorating electrical infrastructure, citing frequent sightings of snapped wires and unsafe poles. A resident of Suddaguntepalya, Payal Yadav, noted how dangling wires on footpaths make walking hazardous. In a notable 2023 incident, a university student suffered burns when a pole carrying an optical fibre cable collapsed after coming into contact with a water tanker. Though Bescom claims it addressed 39,024 hazardous electrical spots between April and September 2024, 17,463 still remain unattended.

BBMP Extends Welfare Scheme Deadline



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has extended the application deadline for its wide-ranging social welfare schemes to May 2, offering eligible citizens additional time to benefit from various support programs. Aimed at empowering marginalized and underprivileged communities, the schemes target Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, economically backward minorities, civic workers, persons with disabilities, and individuals from third-gender communities. Applications can be

submitted both physically and online, making the process more accessible. The initiatives cover a diverse spectrum of benefits, including housing assistance under the Onti Mane and Amrita Mahotsav Yojana, financial support for school and college fee reimbursements, and subsidies for higher education both in India and abroad.

Healthcare services form a significant part of the program, with provisions for serious illness treatment, regular health check-ups for senior citizens, and comprehensive medical support for people with disabilities, includ-

ing limb transplants, surgeries, and physiotherapy. Additionally, to promote financial independence and entrepreneurial initiatives, the BBMP is providing incentive funds to purchase musical instruments for small business ventures and to support self-employment opportunities. Students with special abilities are encouraged to utilize this funding to set up small industries or acquire essential tools like laptops to enhance their education.

The welfare package also supports cultural organisations conducting educational events for children with special needs, offering grants to amplify inclusive and accessible cultural engagement. The extension until May 2 has been well received by community leaders, as it allows more time for spreading awareness and ensuring that no eligible beneficiary is left out due to procedural delays or lack of information. As the BBMP continues its commitment to inclusive urban governance, these welfare programs

are seen as crucial tools for reducing inequality and improving the quality of life for some of the city's most vulnerable residents.

Experts Highlight ABA's Role in Autism

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In observance of International Autism Day, the Bangalore International Centre (BIC) hosted a thought-provoking panel discussion on Sunday titled "Understanding ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis) for Autism: Raising Awareness and Dispelling Myths", bringing together a multidisciplinary group of experts committed to autism support and awareness. The session, moderated by speech pathologist and freelance writer Bharathi Prabhu, featured prominent voices in the field, including Radhika Poovayya, Founder of the Samvaad Institute for Speech and Hearing; senior ABA therapists Noor Ayesha

and Nischitha; developmental pediatrician Dr. Chitra Shankar; occupational therapist Preethi Shankar; speech-language pathologist Jovitha Catherine Joy; and cognitive psychologists Roshana Fulmali and Sunanda Kolhe. At the heart of the discussion was Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), a globally recognized, evidence-based approach that has been life-changing for individuals on the autism spectrum. The panel collectively emphasized how ABA helps develop essential skills in communication, social interaction, academics, and independent living, offering a structured pathway for individuals with autism to reach their full potential. Backed by clinical



experience and real-life case studies, the experts debunked common misconceptions surrounding ABA therapy, clarifying that it is not about changing an individual's identity but about equipping them with tools to navigate the world confidently and independently. Through a blend of scientific clarity and emotional insight, the discussion shed light on the long-term benefits of early intervention and personalized care plans

tailored to each child's unique needs. The panelists also stressed the importance of community awareness, parent involvement, and professional collaboration in creating an inclusive support system that celebrates neurodiversity. According to a press release, the event served as both an educational platform and a beacon of hope for families seeking reliable, compassionate, and effective autism support.



Karnataka HC Backs Uniform Civil Code

TPN Correspondent | Karnataka

In a significant judicial observation, the Karnataka High Court has urged Parliament and state legislatures to take concrete steps towards implementing a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) across the country, emphasizing its importance in upholding the constitutional values of justice, equality, secularism, and national integration.

The appeal was made by Justice Sanjiv Kumar while presiding over a case involving the partition of the property of a deceased Muslim woman, Shahnaz Begum. The dispute included her husband and siblings as contesting parties. During the proceedings, the court noted the glaring disparities in the rights accorded to women under different personal laws, stating that such inconsistencies violate the constitutional mandate of gender equality. Justice Kumar highlighted that Article 44 of the Constitution explicitly mentions the goal of a Uniform Civil Code, reflecting the vision of the framers to unify and rationalize personal laws under a common framework that transcends religious boundaries. The

judge observed that the differential treatment of women based on religious doctrines causes systemic injustice and perpetuates inequality in matters such as inheritance, divorce, and maintenance. In this context, the court viewed the UCC not just as a legal reform but as a moral and constitutional necessity. Although the implementation of a Uniform Civil Code has long been debated in political and legal circles, this fresh call from a High Court bench adds judicial weight to the discourse. The judgment may spark renewed national conversations, particularly among lawmakers, activists, and religious communities, about the feasibility and implications of standardizing personal laws. The Karnataka High Court's remarks echo similar sentiments expressed in past verdicts by other courts and align with a broader vision of harmonizing individual rights with constitutional principles.

The case in question, while specific to one family, served as a legal springboard for the court to address the larger issue of unequal rights and systemic gender bias within personal laws.

Ranya Rao's Custody Extended in Gold Smuggling Case



TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

The judicial custody of Ranya Rao, along with her alleged accomplices Tarun Raju and Sahil Jain, has been extended till April 21 in the high-profile gold smuggling case currently under investigation by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).

The extension follows revelations that Rao was involved in smuggling approximately 14.56 kilograms of gold into India, resulting in a customs duty loss of ₹4.45 crore to the government.

Ranya Rao was arrested on March 3 at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport, where she was caught with 14.8 kg of gold in her possession. Investigations revealed that the smuggled gold was funneled into domestic markets through

hawala channels, with Sahil Jain playing a significant role in its distribution. Jain was arrested on March 26 and has also been remanded to judicial custody. Multiple courts, including the Magistrate Court, the Special Court for Economic Offences, and the 64th CCH Sessions Court in Bengaluru, have denied Rao's bail applications, citing the gravity of the charges and the ongoing probe under Section 108 of the Customs Act.

The DRI submitted that Rao confessed to using illegal financial networks to acquire and traffic the gold, raising suspicions about a broader smuggling ring operating in the region. Authorities are now expanding the scope of the investigation to trace further links and financial transactions related to the case.

ED Raids TN Minister Nehru's Properties

TPN Correspondent | Tamilnadu

In a significant development, officers from the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) on Monday, April 7, 2025, carried out widespread search operations at around 30 locations across Tamil Nadu, including the residence of Municipal Administration Minister K.N. Nehru in Tiruchi, properties linked to his family members, and offices of the real estate firm True Value Homes (TVH).

The raids, which began around 7 a.m. in Tiruchi's Thillai Nagar area, targeted not only Mr. Nehru's home but also the premises associated with his brothers, including those connected to his

late younger brother K.N. Ramajayam, who was the founder of TVH. The ED is probing alleged money laundering and Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion involving TVH.

Central armed security personnel provided protection to the ED teams during the operation, maintaining tight security around the search sites. While the raids unfolded in Tiruchi and other locations, Minister K.N. Nehru was attending the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly session in Chennai. As news of the searches spread, a number of DMK party cadres gathered outside Nehru's residence in a show of support, raising slogans and expressing solidarity.



The operation marks a notable escalation in the central agency's scrutiny of political figures in Tamil Nadu, and the involvement of TVH in the probe suggests a corporate-political nexus being examined by investiga-

tors. The late K.N. Ramajayam, known in the region for his business ventures, had strong ties to both the real estate industry and political circles, which the ED believes may have facilitated the

alleged financial irregularities. Sources from the police indicated that two separate ED teams conducted the coordinated raids, suggesting a well-planned strategy to secure evidence without alerting the involved parties.

Delhi Metro Unveils 3-Coach Corridor

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a landmark move towards efficient urban transit, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has announced the launch of India's first metro corridor exclusively designed for three-coach trains. This unique corridor, part of the ambitious Phase-IV expansion, will run between Lajpat Nagar and Saket G Block, covering a distance of eight kilometres and featuring eight strategically placed stations to improve last-mile connectivity in key residential and commercial zones. Unlike traditional



Delhi Metro lines that deploy four, six, or eight-coach trains, this corridor will exclusively use three-coach trains tailored for short-distance city travel.

The DMRC highlighted that this smaller train

configuration offers a cost-effective and agile solution, improving frequency and operational efficiency while accommodating the specific passenger flow demands of the route. Each train will

be capable of carrying up to 900 passengers—300 per coach—ensuring smooth and comfortable commutes during peak hours. The stations will feature 74-metre platforms, optimized for the new train size, ensuring seamless boarding and deboarding. DMRC officials stated that the decision was based on a realistic assessment of projected passenger density.

Unlike high-capacity routes that require longer trains, the Lajpat Nagar-Saket stretch primarily serves short-distance travelers who benefit more from frequent,

quick services rather than larger trains with excess capacity. The three-coach system, the DMRC added, promotes economic sustainability while maintaining high-quality service standards.

The project's foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2024, and construction is currently underway, with completion targeted for 2028. This development signals a significant step in Delhi Metro's evolution, aligning infrastructure with passenger needs and optimizing resource use for better urban mobility.

AAI Begins Site Inspection for Bengaluru's Second Airport

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru

In a major step towards establishing Bengaluru's long-anticipated second international airport, a team from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) commenced a three-day inspection of shortlisted sites across Karnataka on April 7, 2025. The initiative comes as Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) nears its saturation point, pushing authorities to fast-track plans for a new greenfield facility that

can accommodate future growth in passenger traffic and commercial aviation demand.

According to officials, three potential sites are under evaluation—two located along Kanakapura Road (spanning 4,800 and 5,000 acres) and one on the Nelamangala-Kunigal Road (approximately 5,200 acres). The Karnataka government has pledged to provide at least 4,500 acres for the project, depending on the site selection. During the visit,

the AAI delegation will be assessing critical parameters such as topography, historical weather data, transport accessibility, waterbodies, and elevation challenges.

The Karnataka State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (KSIIDC), which is managing the project planning, is presenting comprehensive technical details, including satellite imagery, Survey of India data, revenue maps, and logistical considerations.



The central government has also been assured of full state support for the project. Speaking earlier, Karnataka Infrastructure Minister M.B. Patil underlined the urgency of the second airport, highlighting that the 150-kilometre

exclusivity clause for the current airport expires in 2033. "We are accelerating the process to ensure the infrastructure is in place well in advance. ₹1.21 crore has already been sanctioned for this feasibility assessment," he said.

Madras HC Extends Kamra's Bail

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

The Madras High Court on Monday, April 7, 2025, extended interim protection from arrest granted to comedian Kunal Kamra until April 17. The case, filed by the Khar police in Mumbai, pertains to Kamra's alleged slanderous remarks against Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde during his recent comedy show, Naya Bharat. Justice Sunder Mohan issued the extension after Kamra's counsel, Advocate V. Suresh, assisted by S. Tanvi, informed the court that a private notice had already been served on the Khar police, as directed by the court in its March 28 order when it

initially granted the interim anticipatory bail. The judge then directed the High Court Registry to verify whether the official court notice had also been served and scheduled the next hearing for April 17. During the proceedings, Suresh revealed that after Kamra was granted interim inter-state anticipatory bail, the Khar police filed three more FIRs against him, disturbed his elderly parents by visiting their Mumbai residence despite Kamra residing in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu since 2021, and had even summoned attendees of the comedy show for inquiry. Meanwhile, in a political turn, the Shiv Sena claimed

that BookMyShow has removed Kamra from its artist listings, reflecting the rising heat around the controversy. However, the court chose not to delve into the merits of the case. Justice Mohan reiterated that the interim relief was temporary and intended to allow Kamra sufficient time to approach the Bombay High Court for regular anticipatory bail. When asked about the progress in this regard, Suresh confirmed that steps had been taken to file the necessary petition before the Bombay High Court. The case now awaits further hearing on April 17 as the legal and political drama surrounding Kamra continues to unfold.



India's Window in Trump Tariff Era

On April 2, US President Donald Trump shook the foundations of the post-World War II global trade order by announcing sweeping tariffs across the board, with some targeted country-specific measures that surpassed even the expectations of his staunchest business backers. The global markets responded with shock, plummeting by 10% in the US alone, while the Federal Reserve is now expected to hold off on any planned interest rate cuts, fearing inflation. Analysts are drawing dramatic parallels to the Great Depression of the 1930s, highlighting the potential economic upheaval such trade policies may induce. While countries around the world have expressed concern and maintained their right to retaliate, most have refrained from taking immediate action—except China, which imposed reciprocal 34% tariffs on US imports. However, due to China's larger export volume, the intent appears more strategic—targeting Trump's support base in the agriculture belt to create political discomfort ahead of the elections. Europe's response is fragmented. The European Commission leans towards retaliation, but key nations like Germany and France, mired in political transitions and internal instability, prefer to tread cautiously and negotiate tariff reductions. Meanwhile, Canada and Mexico, who already faced tariffs under Trump's earlier moves targeting steel and aluminum, were excluded from the latest wave of 10% across-the-board tariffs—likely due to their deep integration with the US economy under the USMCA. In Southeast Asia, Singapore's Prime Minister delivered a stark assessment, declaring the death of the multilateral global trade order and warning that smaller nations may lose out significantly if trade deals become predominantly bilateral, as multilateral frameworks erode.

The broader context reveals that the US's move is rooted in long-standing concerns about China's exploitation of WTO provisions, which helped it dominate 32% of global manufacturing through state subsidies and technology transfers. Now, as the US retreats from globalised trade norms, volatility in trade policy is expected to continue, driven by internal political motives. The American domestic landscape remains deeply polarized, with protests against govern-



ment policies breaking out. Yet, Trump's base remains firmly behind him, muting significant Republican dissent. With Republicans controlling both chambers of Congress, institutional checks and balances are compromised. Radical right-wing elements are increasingly influencing decision-making. One such figure, Laura Loomer, is reportedly linked to the recent firings of key personnel from the National Security Council and NSA. This radical reshaping of internal governance further complicates US policymaking and its international engagement.

In this shifting landscape, India faces both risk and opportunity. The US is India's largest trading partner, with bilateral trade exceeding \$200 billion and a \$45 billion surplus in India's favor. While the protective US stance will close doors

for some nations, it may open others for those like India, who can reposition themselves smartly. Notably, Indian goods currently face 26% tariffs, significantly lower than the 54% and 46% tariffs levied on Chinese and Vietnamese products, respectively. This differential offers a competitive advantage—if India can swiftly negotiate sector-specific deals. India appears to be acting accordingly. Following a February 13 meeting between the Indian Prime Minister and President Trump in Washington, both nations agreed to pursue a bilateral trade pact. Talks have already begun, with the Indian Commerce Minister visiting the US and reciprocated by an Assistant US Trade Representative visiting India. A framework has been established, and detailed discussions across key sectors are now underway

Parliament's Performance vs. Pretense

For two consecutive days during the recently concluded Budget session, Parliamentarians sat from 11 am till 4 am the next morning, clocking an exhausting 17 hours. It may seem like democracy is working overtime, but a closer look reveals a far more cynical performance. These all-night sessions, rather than symbolizing democratic vitality, masked a disturbing erosion of parliamentary accountability. As columnist Vir Sanghvi once put it, Parliament is slowly turning into a "deep, dark chamber"—a metaphor disturbingly apt for what transpired. Take, for instance, the debate on the imposition of President's Rule in Manipur. Although the notification was issued on February 13 and Parliament reconvened on March 10, the discussion was postponed until the session's final stretch, that too well past midnight. The Lok Sabha granted it a mere 44 minutes, while in the Rajya Sabha, despite allocating three hours, the ruling BJP used just two minutes of its 75-minute quota. Astonishingly, the BJP's own floor leaders cut short their speaker midway—exemplifying a level of indifference that borders on contempt. The budget session was also marked by moments that demonstrated the resilience of the Opposition, even as procedural neglect continued unabated. In the Rajya Sabha vote on the Waqf Bill, the Opposition tallied an impressive 95 votes. Had a few members not been medically advised against traveling—such as JMM's Shibu Soren and Mahua Majhi, or NCP's Sharad Pawar and AITC's Subrata Bakshi—the count might have touched 100. One Opposition vote was lost due to a technical glitch, yet the strength on display sent a strong message. Meanwhile, the constitutional requirement for a Deputy Speaker in the Lok Sabha remains unmet, even 300 days after the current term began. Article 93 mandates the election of a Deputy Speaker "as soon as may be," but the government appears content to leave the post vacant, a pattern now becoming institutionalized. The systematic side-lining of the Opposition continued unabated. Not a single Opposition notice was admitted for discussion—something that hasn't happened since December 2023. The last Calling Attention Motion was accepted in July 2024, concerning floods in Kerala. Since then, attempts by the Opposition to raise urgent issues such as youth unemployment and voter ID duplications were met with silence. Faced with a communication blockade, the Opposition adopted a tactical shift—brief walkouts replacing longer protests. MPs would exit the House for 10–30 minutes, register their dissent, and return. It was a smart maneuver, drawn from the late Sitaram Yechury's playbook, signaling protest without derailing proceedings. Prime Minister Modi's absence during the Waqf Bill vote was another symbolic moment. With him abroad, he neither supported nor opposed the bill—nor even abstained. History will record his silence. Amidst the high drama, lighter moments reminded everyone that Parliament is also a human space. Forty-eight MPs across 17 parties attended the 15th LAMP (Legislative Assistants to MPs) Convocation at the India International Centre, praising young interns for their year-long contributions. Two DMK MPs found time to launch books—Tiruchi Siva released a compilation of his WhatsApp good morning messages, while Dr. T. Sumathy unveiled her work on Beatrice Webb. Amusingly, both launches were scheduled simultaneously at different venues. Finally, all eyes were on Amit Shah, who emerged as BJP's top performer—piloting three major bills, speaking for 45 minutes on Waqf (though not its pilot), and making rare cafeteria appearances to interact across party lines.

Startups Need More Than Scale

India's entrepreneurial landscape finds itself at a crossroads, caught between the buzz of billion-dollar valuations and the quieter call for true innovation. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal recently stirred debate by questioning whether India's startup ecosystem is content creating delivery apps rather than pioneering transformative technologies. His comments—criticised by some and praised by others—shine a light on a deeper issue: the difference between upstarts and genuine startups. The distinction is more than semantics; it's about ambition, originality, and a willingness to innovate at the edge rather than replicate existing ideas. Consider Vinod Khosla, a pioneering technologist and venture capitalist who once returned to Delhi before heading back to Silicon Valley to ride the digital wave. His passion lies not in copying successful models but in creating new ones—in AI, biotech, and energy. India needs that mindset. The term "startup" has become synonymous with rapid scaling and high valuations, yet many of India's celebrated unicorns are essentially local adaptations of global ideas. Flipkart mirrored Amazon, Paytm echoed PayPal, and Zomato resembled Yelp. They were smart businesses but not disruptive innovators. This "this of that" culture, as investor



Kashyap Deorah put it, has become dominant—fueled by venture capitalists chasing quick returns and media obsessed with valuation milestones. But true startup culture must be rooted in novelty, intellectual property, and a hunger to solve global problems. India has examples that

fit the mold: InMobi, which turned down a Google acquisition and competes globally in mobile advertising; I-flex Solutions, later bought by Oracle; and Zoho, quietly taking on Microsoft. Yet these firms, despite their scale and substance, lack the glamour associated with unicorn head-

lines. India hasn't produced a Google or a Tesla—not yet. But unlike China, which is investing heavily in home-grown tech breakthroughs like DeepSeek, India's ecosystem often orients itself around consumer growth and service models, not scientific breakthroughs. It wasn't always this way.

India has a strong legacy of research through institutions like CSIR, DRDO, and ISRO, which have quietly driven world-class innovation. What's missing now is the bridge between scientific progress and entrepreneurial action. There's a need for entrepreneurs who not only dream big but risk big—those who seek patents over press coverage and breakthroughs over branding. Historical figures like Jamshedji Tata, who built a steel plant in colonial India, or Verghese Kurien, who revolutionized dairy with Amul, exemplify the spirit of innovation and endurance. They operated before "startup" became a buzzword, yet they were more revolutionary than many modern ventures. Risk-taking must be encouraged in the right context, with entrepreneurs distinguishing between gamble and vision. India must also shed the entitlement culture in startup circles—expecting state support, subsidies, and soft landings—while ignoring the grit and patience real innovation demands. Several less-publicized Indian companies like MOSChip in semiconductors or Intellect Design Arena in fintech have created real value without noise. These firms deserve recognition, if not for their size, then for their staying power and focus on intellectual property



LPG, CNG Prices Hiked Nationwide

In a significant move affecting households across the country, the government on Monday announced a steep hike in the prices of domestic cooking gas (LPG) and compressed natural gas (CNG), alongside an increase in excise duties on petrol and diesel. Effective from April 8, 2025, the price of an LPG cylinder has been raised by Rs 50, while CNG will cost Re 1 more per kilogram in the national capital and nearby regions. The hike applies to both Ujjawala beneficiaries — who received free LPG connections under the government's flagship scheme for the poor — and general consumers. As per the new rates, Ujjawala consumers in Delhi will pay Rs 553 for a 14.2-kg cylinder, up from Rs 503, while general users will now have to shell out Rs 853 per cylinder.

The announcement was made by Union Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, who attributed the hike to the rising input costs, including a nearly 4% increase in natural gas prices last week. He emphasized that the revisions were necessary to keep pace with global pricing trends and maintain the sustainability of supply. This marks the first price revision for LPG since March last year, when rates were actually reduced by Rs 100 per cylinder, offering temporary relief to consumers. However, with inflationary pressures mounting again and international energy costs rising, the government has opted to increase both product prices and fuel taxes to manage fiscal needs.

The revision in CNG prices will impact public transport, delivery services, and personal mobility costs, particularly in urban areas where CNG is widely used. Additionally, the decision to raise excise duties on petrol and diesel is expected to have a broader impact on transportation costs and commodity prices, potentially fueling inflationary trends. While the government views these changes as a necessary step to boost revenue and manage fiscal deficits, the hikes are likely to spark political and public reactions, especially as they affect lower- and middle-income households directly. The full impact of these changes will unfold in the coming weeks as consumers and transport sectors adjust to the new rates.

President Murmu Begins Portugal State Visit

President Droupadi Murmu arrived in Lisbon on Sunday, April 7, 2025, marking the beginning of a significant four-day State Visit to Portugal and the Slovak Republic. This visit, the first of its kind by an Indian President in nearly three decades, underscores India's renewed diplomatic focus on Europe at a time of global economic realignment. The timing of President Murmu's tour is especially crucial, coinciding with recent trade policy shifts, particularly new tariffs imposed by the United States, which have disrupted global supply chains and are reshaping international commerce. Against this backdrop, India is actively expanding its engagement with European nations to bolster cooperation in trade, technology, education, sustainability, and innovation. Upon her arrival at Lisbon's Figo Maduro military airbase, President Murmu was welcomed with warmth and ceremony by Puneet



R. Kundal, Ambassador of India to Portugal, and Joao Ribeiro de Almeida, Portugal's Ambassador to India. The reception reflected the growing importance both countries place on their bilateral relationship, which

has seen positive momentum in recent years. During her stay in Portugal, President Murmu is expected to engage in a series of high-level meetings, cultural exchanges, and public events aimed at enhancing

mutual understanding and deepening ties between the two democracies. The visit is expected to pave the way for new partnerships, particularly in areas of digital transformation, green energy, and youth exchange programs. It also serves to highlight India's broader strategy of fostering relationships beyond its traditional allies, positioning itself as a proactive global player in an increasingly multipolar world. After concluding her engagements in Portugal, President Murmu will travel to the Slovak Republic for the second leg of her tour, further emphasizing India's commitment to strengthening its presence and partnerships across Central and Eastern Europe. Her visit is not just ceremonial but represents a deeper diplomatic intent to align India's growth trajectory with likeminded nations that share democratic values and a vision for sustainable global development.

Rahul Gandhi Launches White T-Shirt Yatra

In a bold move to spotlight youth-centric issues, Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Monday joined the Congress party's 'Palayan Roko, Naukri Do' padyatra in Bihar's Begusarai district. The campaign, symbolized by a call to wear white t-shirts, aims to highlight the pressing concerns of unemployment and inflation that continue to affect Bihar's youth. Gandhi, who represents Rae Bareli in Parliament, called upon young people across the state to don white t-shirts as a visual form of protest to pressure the central and state governments into addressing the crisis of joblessness and migration. Accompanying him on the yatra was NSUI national in-charge and former JNU student leader Kanhaiya Kumar, who hails from Begusarai. Their joint appearance underscored the Congress party's renewed push to connect with the youth and grassroots issues ahead



of the 2025 Bihar assembly elections. The yatra drew significant local support and media attention as Gandhi walked alongside students, unemployed youth, and party workers through the streets, engaging with

citizens and listening to their grievances. Meanwhile, the political rhetoric intensified as Union Minister and BJP MP from Begusarai, Giriraj Singh, hit back at the Congress campaign, accusing the party of failing to

eliminate poverty during its decades of rule. He praised the developmental work under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, claiming that the current administration is focused on real, measurable progress. The Congress campaign, however, positions itself as a people's movement to reverse the trend of mass migration from Bihar due to lack of opportunities, inadequate wages, and stagnant job creation. By choosing Begusarai — a politically symbolic and industrially significant region — the Congress appears to be laying the groundwork for a youth-focused narrative in the run-up to elections. The 'White T-shirt' movement is expected to continue across multiple districts, signaling the party's intent to take its battle against unemployment directly to the streets and amplify grassroots voices on national platforms.

Dubai Crown Prince to Visit India



Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Crown Prince of Dubai and also the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, is set to embark on his first official visit to India on April 8 and 9, 2025. This high-level diplomatic engagement comes at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is expected to further enhance the strategic partnership between India and the United Arab Emirates. According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the Crown Prince will hold key meet-

ings with top Indian leaders including Prime Minister Modi, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. One of the highlights of the visit will be a "working lunch" hosted by Prime Minister Modi in honor of the Crown Prince on April 8, reflecting the significance of the bilateral relationship. Apart from political engagements, Sheikh Hamdan will participate in a business roundtable aimed at exploring new opportunities to deepen economic and investment ties between the two

nations. He will be accompanied by a high-powered delegation consisting of ministers, senior government officials, and leading members of the UAE business community, signifying the focus on economic diplomacy and cross-sectoral collaboration. This visit is being closely watched by analysts as India and the UAE continue to strengthen their comprehensive strategic partnership, which has seen a rapid expansion in trade, energy cooperation, and technological exchange in recent years.

Modi Inaugurates Pamban Bridge, Targets DMK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated India's first vertical lift sea bridge — the Pamban rail bridge — in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu, hailing it as a "symbol of the union of technology and tradition." The state-of-the-art bridge connects Rameswaram island to the mainland and marks a major infrastructure milestone in the region. However, the inauguration wasn't without political undertones, as Modi took a veiled swipe at the ruling DMK government in Tamil Nadu, particularly noting the absence of Chief Minister M. K. Stalin from the event.

In his address, Prime Minister Modi not only underscored the technological importance of the bridge but also wove in cultural and linguistic references, playing the "Tamil pride" card amid ongoing debates over the "three-language formula" in the state. He urged the Tamil Nadu government to embrace regional language in higher education and medical training, suggesting that Tamil should be introduced as a medium of instruction for medical courses. "Many states across the country have started medical education in the mother tongue. Now,

even the sons or daughters of the poorest mothers who have not studied English can become doctors. I would also request the Tamil Nadu government to start medical courses in the Tamil language," he said.

Modi further highlighted the central government's contribution to health-care infrastructure in the state, noting that 11 new medical colleges had been established in Tamil Nadu in recent years. He emphasized the global interest in Indian culture and heritage, stating that the government is making dedicated efforts to ensure that Tamil language and culture are promoted worldwide.

The Prime Minister's remarks come at a politically sensitive time, with Tamil Nadu's DMK-led government often at odds with the Centre over language policies and federal autonomy. The Pamban event thus became both a showcase of national development and a platform for subtle political messaging. Modi's pitch for Tamil pride is seen as a strategic outreach to the Tamil electorate, especially ahead of key elections, attempting to blend cultural reverence with infrastructural progress.



"Oil Prices Are Down, There Is No Inflation": Trump Doubles Down On Tariffs

- Global markets plunge amid trade war fears.
- Fed Chair warns tariffs may raise inflation.
- Trump urges interest rate cuts, blames Powell.

TPN Correspondent | US

U.S. President Donald Trump has defended his administration's tariff policies, stating that the U.S. economy remains resilient despite mounting concerns over a global economic downturn. Trump's comments come as stock markets across Asia and Europe experienced sharp declines following the announcement of new tariffs, sparking fears of a looming trade war.

In a post on his social media platform, Truth Social, Trump assured Americans, "Oil prices are down, interest rates are down, food prices are down, there is NO INFLATION." He emphasized that tariffs already in place were bringing in billions

of dollars to the U.S. from other nations, particularly those he has called out for "abusing" the U.S. in past trade deals. Trump singled out China, calling it "the biggest abuser of them all" and accused the country of raising its tariffs by 34% in retaliation.

China, in response, announced new tariffs on U.S. imports starting April 10 and threatened to take legal action against Washington at the World Trade Organization. Chinese officials also expressed their displeasure, stating that U.S. tariffs were "economic bullying" and would only serve America's interests, harming global trade relations.

The trade tension has led to a significant market sell-off. Eu-



ropean indices dropped dramatically, with Paris and London down nearly 6%, while Asian markets also experienced heavy losses. The Nikkei 225 in Japan halted trading due to panic selling, and India's Sensex and Nifty indices saw their worst drops in months, losing over 5% in early trade.

Amid these developments, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell warned that Trump's tariffs

could push inflation up and slow economic growth. Despite this, Trump urged Powell to cut interest rates to stimulate the economy, accusing him of "playing politics" in his role at the Fed.

As global markets reel from the fallout of these tariffs, Trump remains firm, urging Americans to "be strong, courageous, and patient" as his policies continue to shape global trade dynamics.



Myanmar Faces Thunderstorms as Earthquake Devastation Worsens

TPN Correspondent | Bangkok

People in Myanmar's earthquake-stricken regions are bracing for thunderstorms late Sunday, with heavy rains and strong winds disrupting ongoing rescue and relief operations. The storms have added to the suffering of those who lost their homes in the March 28 earthquake, forcing many to sleep in the open under harsh conditions.

Myanmar's state-run MRTV issued a warning on Sunday evening, forecasting scattered showers and thunderstorms across the country for the next week. "The public is advised to be aware of the possibility of untimely rain accompanied by strong winds, lightning, hail, and landslides," MRTV stated. The weather is expected to worsen, with daytime temperatures reaching 38°C (100°F) by mid-week.

The earthquake, with a magnitude of 7.7, struck near Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city. The epicenter hit several regions and states, including the capital Naypyitaw, leaving a significant trail of destruction. As of Sunday, Myanmar's military government confirmed 3,564 deaths, with 5,012 injuries and 210 people still missing.

The disaster severely affected infrastructure, leaving many areas without power or telephone services and damaging roads and bridges. These conditions have hampered efforts to assess the full scale of the damage. Rescue teams were forced to halt electrical equipment temporarily due to the rain, but operations continue despite the challenges posed by the weather.

As rain and strong winds caused further collapses of buildings, rescue workers faced additional obstacles. Reports indicate that at least 80 bodies were found at the Great Wall Hotel in Mandalay after rubble was cleared on Sunday afternoon, though this has yet to be confirmed.

The earthquake's impact is far-reaching, with over 5,000 buildings, 1,800 schools, and numerous religious sites and infrastructure damaged. The recovery and relief efforts are ongoing, but the full extent of the devastation remains unclear due to the challenging conditions.



Gold Prices Dip Worldwide in Wake of Market Downturn

TPN Correspondent | US

Precious metals continued their upward trajectory in March, with both gold and silver posting significant gains. Comex gold, in particular, surged past the psychological \$3,100 mark, reaching a new all-time high.

The bullish sentiment surrounding these precious metals was largely fueled by growing concerns over the potential fallout from U.S. tariffs, which have been a source of economic uncertainty. Investors flocked to safe-haven assets like gold and silver, seeking stability amid these turbulent conditions. Additionally, the anticipation of interest rate cuts by the Federal Reserve further supported the positive outlook for precious metals. Lower interest rates typically reduce the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding assets like gold, making them more attractive to investors.

Gold's performance, driven by these factors, reflects the broader market sentiment that fears of economic instability are growing. Investors tend to turn to gold during periods of economic uncertainty due to its historical reputation as a store of value. Silver, too, mirrored gold's upward movement, gaining in tandem as market participants sought out both metals in response to global economic pressures.

As the outlook for the global economy remains clouded by trade tensions and shifting monetary policies, the precious metals market is expected to remain volatile. However, the steady demand for gold and silver suggests that they will continue to perform well as investors look for ways to hedge against the uncertainties ahead.

BAPS Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi Celebrates Ram Navami with Grandeur

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The BAPS Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi recently celebrated Ram Navami and Swaminarayan Jayanti with remarkable devotion and grandeur, marking a significant moment for cultural and spiritual unity in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Devotees from various regions gathered at the temple to participate in a day filled with devotional and cultural activities, reflecting the deep spiritual significance of these occasions.

According to Pujya Brahmavihari Swami, the head priest of the temple, the celebrations began early in the day with Ram Bhajans from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., followed by the Shri Ram Janmotsav Aarti at noon.



The event witnessed an overwhelming turnout, with devotees and visitors coming together to honor Lord Ram and Bhagwan Swaminarayan. The celebrations emphasized unity, peace, and the eternal values of Hinduism, resonating

beyond borders.

A highlight of the event was a special cultural presentation by BAPS, staged to resemble the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati. Through a combination of mu-

sic, drama, and storytelling, young artists brought the life and virtues of Lord Ram to the stage, captivating the audience with their performances.

The temple, known for fostering interfaith harmony and spiritual devotion, continues to be a beacon of global Hindu pride. Ram Navami, the festival celebrating the birth of Lord Ram, is one of the most revered events in Hinduism. Lord Ram, considered the seventh avatar of Lord Vishnu, symbolizes virtue, justice, and righteousness. Ram Navami occurs on the ninth day of the Shukla Paksha of Chaitra, which falls between March and April in the Hindu calendar. It is also celebrated as part of the larger Chaitra Navaratri festival, a time for devotees to express devotion and seek divine blessings.

South Korea to Set June 3 Date for Presidential Election Following Yoon Suk Yeol's Removal



South Korea's cabinet is expected to finalize June 3, 2025, as the date for a presidential election after the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol for his brief martial law declaration last week, according to Yonhap news on Monday, April 7, 2025.

The final decision, though not legally required, will be made during a cabinet meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 8, 2025. The meeting is necessary to approve a public holiday for the election, a decision that is

expected to be officially confirmed. An unnamed government official told Yonhap that the cabinet's meeting will be key in setting the date for the upcoming election.

Yoon Suk Yeol was removed from office by South Korea's Constitutional Court after being found guilty of violating his official duties. The impeachment stemmed from his issuance of a martial law decree on December 3, 2024, which involved the deployment of troops to block

parliamentary sessions. This action, which was seen as an overreach of power, led to widespread protests and calls for his resignation.

Under South Korean law, if a sitting president dies or is removed from office, a new presidential election must be held within 60 days. While the reports citing June 3 as the election date have circulated widely, the date will not become official until it is declared by the acting president, Prime

Minister Han Duck-soo.

The issue of Yoon's removal has sparked intense debate and protests across the country. Thousands rallied in support of the ousted president, calling for his reinstatement and expressing concerns over what they perceived as an overstep of judicial power. Despite the public unrest, the legal process has continued to unfold, with the cabinet now preparing for the next steps toward a new election.

Bloodbath on D-Street

Sensex Suffers 2,200+ Point Fall; Global Recession Jitters Rattle Investors



Domestic stock markets were shaken. They lost heavily on Monday. Fears of a global economic recession due to President Trump's tariffs and retaliatory tariffs have shaken the indices. The US markets' collapse on Friday affected Asian and Indian indices on Monday. Investors sold their shares due to fear. It is difficult to say the fall in metal and realty shares. Media, auto, commodities, banking and finance shares fell by 4%. On the other hand, the dollar, rupee and bitcoin also rose. Gold, which is considered a safety investment, also fell. The fear index India VIX rose by 66% in the wake of geopolitical tensions, indicating uncertainty. In total, Nifty fell by 742 points and Sensex by 2226 points.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 75,364 in the previous session, opened at 71,449 on Monday. It touched an intraday low of 71,425. It reached an intraday high of 73,403. It finally closed

at 73,137, down 2,226 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 21,758, hit a low of 21,743 and a high of 22,254. It fell by a total of 742 points to close at 22,161. The Nifty Bank fell by 1,642 points to settle at 49,860.

2 companies gained while 46 lost in the Nifty50. Hindustan Unilever and Zomato were the top gainers in the Nifty. Trent, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Hindalco, Shriram Finance were the biggest losers. Metal and realty rose by 5 to 6 percent. Media, auto, commodities, manufacturing, finance, private bank, infra, bank and healthcare shares fell by more than 3 percent. Oil, energy, pharma, consumption, IT, PSE and FMCG fell by more than 1 percent.

Market breadth on NSE today turned in favour of sellers. 327 stocks rose. A total of 2640 shares fell. Shares of 18 companies touched 52-week highs. 645 shares reached 52-week lows. 26 shares touched the upper circuit and

384 shares touched the lower circuit.

Shares of HPCL, BPCL and Indian Oil companies rose by 6% from their daily lows as Brent crude oil fell to a four-year low. The rupee weakened by 61 paise to settle at 85.84 against the dollar. The Centre increased duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 2 each. Fear Index IndiaWIX rose by 66% today to 22.84. This gives an idea of the uncertainty that is going to prevail. Indian markets have fared better compared to the fall in Asian and European markets. They fell by 13% while Nifty and Sensex fell by only 3.5%. Morgan Stanley has given Reliance an overweight rating with a target price of Rs 1606. HSBC has given a buy rating to Ventive Hospitality with a target price of Rs. 854.

Kalyan Jewellers India Ltd (KALYANKJIL)

Kalyan Jewellers has been on investor radar recently with strong momentum in stock price performance. The company is benefiting from robust wedding season demand and increasing footfall across its showrooms. Its expansion strategy into tier-2 and tier-3 cities is yielding positive results. The company reported healthy growth in Q4 sales and margin improvement. Recent buying interest pushed the stock up nearly 9% in a single session, supported by institutional activity and an upgrade by analysts. Investors remain optimistic due to strong brand positioning and a growing customer base.



NTPC Ltd (NTPC)

NTPC, India's largest power generation company, continues to maintain a stable outlook backed by steady generation and capacity addition. The company is actively transitioning into renewables, with plans to scale up solar and wind energy projects significantly in the coming years. It recently announced commissioning of several renewable power plants and is looking at green hydrogen as a future growth driver. The stock has shown resilience during market volatility, with analysts giving it a long-term buy rating due to predictable earnings and strong government support.



Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd (POWERGRID)

Power Grid has been a consistent performer in the utilities space, known for its stable financials and dividend payouts. The company is central to India's power transmission infrastructure and continues to receive approvals for new inter-state transmission projects. It is also investing in grid modernization and smart metering infrastructure. The stock has attracted defensive buying recently amid market volatility. Analysts favor Power Grid for its predictable cash flows, healthy return ratios, and robust balance sheet.



SBI Cards and Payment Services Ltd (SBICARD)

SBICard has faced some short-term headwinds due to rising delinquencies in unsecured lending and cautious investor sentiment around consumer finance. However, its strong affiliation with SBI and wide customer base gives it a solid moat. Recent quarterly results showed modest growth in card spends and active customer base, although margins were slightly compressed due to rising costs. Analysts suggest cautious optimism, especially as the digital payments sector continues to expand rapidly in India. The company is working on improving collections and diversifying its credit card portfolio.



Central Depository Services Ltd (CDSL)

CDSL continues to benefit from increasing retail participation in equity markets. With over 10 crore demat accounts, it has a significant market share in depository services. The company has posted strong earnings growth in recent quarters, supported by higher transaction volumes and record account openings. Market volatility tends to boost activity in the depository business, helping CDSL's topline. With digitalization in Indian markets deepening and IPO activity



expected to rise, CDSL is well-positioned for continued growth. Analysts remain bullish, with many suggesting it as a structural long-term play.

Government Hikes Excise Duty on Petrol and Diesel by ₹2 per Litre



On Monday, the Government of India announced an increase in excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹2 per litre, effective from April 8, 2025, as per a notification issued by the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

As per the official order, the excise duty on petrol has been raised to ₹13 per litre, while diesel will now attract an excise duty of ₹10 per litre. The change comes as part of the government's ongoing efforts to manage its revenue and control economic conditions.

Despite the hike in excise duties, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas assured the public that there would be no direct impact on consumers. The ministry confirmed that the retail prices of petrol and diesel would not increase, meaning the financial burden will not be passed on to the common man.

The government's decision follows a series of fiscal measures, including the scrapping of the windfall profit tax on domestic crude and fuel exports in December 2024. This tax, initially imposed on July 1, 2022, was removed as global oil prices continued to decline, easing pressure on the domestic fuel market.

The excise duty hike is expected to impact government revenues positively, but the assurance of stable fuel prices aims to maintain public confidence, especially as global oil markets remain volatile.

The increase in excise duties comes at a time when global fuel prices are experiencing fluctuations, and the government is balancing economic policy measures with efforts to shield the common people from price shocks. As the country continues to navigate through economic challenges, these regulatory measures will play a key role in ensuring that the energy sector remains stable, while the government's fiscal health is maintained.

India's Automobile Retail Sales Grow 6.46% in FY25, Markets Show Strong Performance

India's overall automobile retail sales in FY25 (April 2024 to March 2025) experienced a growth of 6.46% compared to the previous year, with passenger vehicles (PV) growing by 4.87%, two-wheelers (2W) rising 7.71%, and commercial vehicles (CV) experiencing a slight decline of 0.17%, according to data released by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) on April 7, 2025.

Rural markets showed a stronger performance, with two-wheelers increasing by 8.39% in rural areas, compared to a 6.77% growth in urban markets. Three-wheelers in rural regions rose by 8.70%, significantly outperforming the 0.28% growth in urban areas. Similarly, passenger vehicles performed better in rural belts, with a 7.93% growth, compared to a 3.07% increase in urban markets.

For the month of March 2025, overall auto retail sales declined 0.7% year-on-year (YoY) but saw a 12% improvement on a month-on-month (MoM) basis. The early-month weakness, caused by the Kharman period, was offset by a surge in the final week, fueled by events like Navratri, Gudi Padwa, Eid, and year-end depreciation benefits.

Segment-wise, two-wheelers saw a decline of 1.7%, while three-wheelers and tractors decreased by 5.6% and 5.7%, respectively. However, passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles showed growth, rising by 6% and 2.6% YoY, respectively. FADA president C.S. Vigneshwar praised the adaptability and resilience of India's auto retail sector, noting the strong performance in rural areas as a key highlight. He also commented on March's sales performance, emphasizing the impact of positive triggers in the final week of the month.

Additionally, Vigneshwar stressed the importance of setting mutually attainable targets between original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and dealers to avoid confusion and financial strain. He highlighted that excessively high targets, set without proper agreement, could hinder sustainable growth and customer satisfaction.

Tata Motors, despite a nearly 3% drop in stock value, continues to gain attention with its strong product strategy, particularly in the electric vehicle (ePV) market.



Rupee Slips to 85.63 Against US Dollar Amid Global Trade War and Market Slump



The Indian rupee fell by 19 paise to 85.63 against the US dollar in early trading on Monday, as the currency market reacted to the global trade war triggered by the US's reciprocal tariffs and China's retaliatory measures. The ongoing trade tensions sent shockwaves through global equity markets, causing them to crash to their lowest levels in years.

Forex traders noted that despite a sharp drop in crude oil prices and a weaker US dollar, the Indian rupee struggled to find support due to persistent foreign fund outflows. The ongoing sell-off in global markets contributed to these outflows, which added pressure on the domestic currency.

Market analysts have highlighted that the global economic uncertainty, driven by the US-China tariff dispute, has created a volatile environment for emerging market currencies, including the rupee. The continued turmoil in equity markets worldwide is adding to the pressure on the rupee, which has struggled to gain stability in the face of global economic challenges.

In the past few weeks, the rupee has witnessed significant fluctuations as a result of global trade tensions, which have led to increased investor caution. The uncertainty around the ongoing trade war, coupled with concerns about an economic slowdown, has resulted in capital outflows from India's equity and bond markets.

On the positive side, crude oil prices have seen a decline, which would typically provide some relief to India's import bill and, in turn, support the rupee. However, the overall global financial instability has overridden this potential benefit, leaving the rupee vulnerable to further declines.

As global equity markets continue to reel from the impact of trade disputes, the outlook for the rupee remains uncertain. Forex experts have urged the Indian government and central bank to closely monitor the situation and take necessary measures to safeguard the currency from further depreciation.

Mahavir Jayanti 2025: Date and Meaning



Mahavir Jayanti, the most sacred festival for the Jain community, will be celebrated this year on April 10, 2025 (Thursday). It marks the birth anniversary of Lord Mahavir, the 24th and final Tirthankara in Jainism—a revered spiritual teacher and enlightened soul who showed the path of non-violence, truth, and renunciation. Observed annually on the 13th day of the Chaitra month as per the Hindu lunar calendar, the date varies each year and typically falls between March and April. Also known as Mahaveer Janma Kalyanak, this festival is not only a day of celebration but also a deep reflection on the teachings and life of Lord Mahavir, who was born in 599 BCE in Kundagram, now in Bihar. He was born to King Siddhartha and Queen Trishala, and lived a royal life until he turned 30. Despite his position as a ruler, Mahavir experienced a spiritual awakening and chose to renounce worldly pleasures, embarking on a quest for truth and enlightenment. Through intense meditation and penance, he eventually attained Kevala Jnana (omniscience) and became a guiding light for followers of Jainism. His core principles—Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahmacharya (celibacy), and Aparigraha (non-possessiveness)—form the foundation of Jain philosophy and ethics. On Mahavir Jayanti, devotees engage in prayers, processions, charitable acts, and visits to Jain temples, where the life and teachings of Mahavir are celebrated and remembered. Statues of Mahavir are bathed ceremonially in a ritual called abhisheka, and sermons are delivered to inspire people to walk the path of righteousness. The festival serves as a reminder to live a life of compassion, simplicity, and spiritual discipline, in line with Mahavir’s timeless message to the world.

Non-Veg Biryani Delivered During Navratri



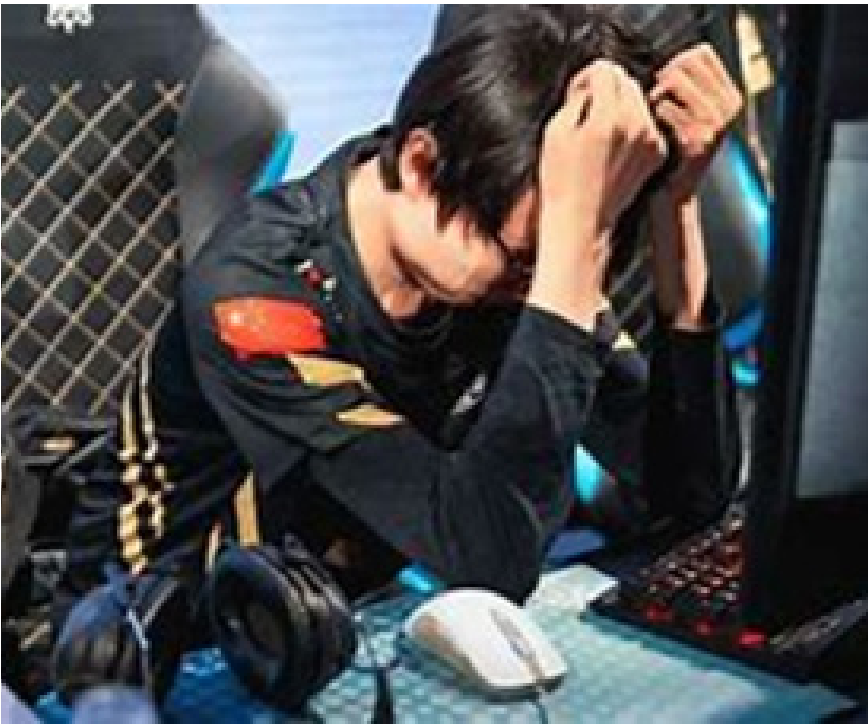
A woman from Noida has sparked controversy online after alleging that she was delivered chicken biryani instead of the vegetarian biryani she ordered through Swiggy during the Navratri festival. The incident, which took place on April 4, involved a meal from the popular restaurant Lakhnavi Kabab Paratha. The woman, identified as Chhaya Sharma, posted a video on social media expressing her distress over receiving non-vegetarian food during the holy period of Navratri, when many people abstain from meat. Her post quickly went viral, drawing sharp reactions from users across platforms and prompting a wave of outrage, especially given the religious sensitivities associated with the festival. In response to the uproar, the Uttar Pradesh Police took swift action by taking one of the restaurant’s staff members into custody for questioning. The incident has reignited the conversation around food delivery ac-

countability and the importance of accuracy in orders, especially during religious observances. While Swiggy has not issued a formal statement as of now, the platform is expected to investigate the matter internally. Meanwhile, Lakhnavi Kabab Paratha is also facing heat online, with many calling for stricter checks and greater sensitivity in handling such orders. This episode has highlighted the potential for seemingly small mistakes to escalate into major controversies, particularly in culturally and religiously significant contexts. Users on social media debated whether legal action was warranted, while others stressed the need for better training of delivery and restaurant staff to avoid such incidents in the future. As the investigation continues, the situation has become a talking point not just in Noida, but across the country, reflecting broader concerns over food labeling, consumer rights, and respect for religious practices.

Chinese Gamer Sues Over Insults

A bizarre yet thought-provoking case has emerged from China, where a longtime gamer has sued a gaming company after claiming that virtual bullying led to his depression. The player, going by the pseudonym Qiaoben, has been playing the multiplayer strategy game Three Kingdoms Kill Online for 15 years and currently holds the highest rank in the game. Despite his skill and achievements, Qiaoben alleges that he became the target of constant humiliation from other players who, after each defeat, would mock him by hurling virtual items like eggs and straw sandals at his in-game character. These symbolic acts, often used to insult opponents in East Asian culture, reportedly affected his mental health to the point that he plunged into depression. He blames the game developers for enabling such forms of

emotional harassment and filed a lawsuit demanding accountability. The game, developed by a Hangzhou-based company and released in 2009, typically involves 4 to 8 players and runs for 10 to 30 minutes per session. Qiaoben’s story has reignited global debate around the psychological impacts of excessive gaming and toxic behavior in online communities. While some argue that the responsibility lies with the game makers to moderate in-game conduct and limit abuse mechanics, others point to personal responsibility and the need for digital resilience. The case underscores how the virtual world, though intangible, can have tangible consequences on mental well-being. It also raises critical concerns about how game design and user interaction features might unintentionally fuel harassment. As gaming



continues to be a central part of modern life, especially in countries like China, this incident

serves as a stark reminder of the blurred lines between entertainment and emotional damage.

BBMP Revises Residential Parking Tax



The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has officially revised the parking tax structure for residential buildings, with changes coming into effect from April 1, 2025. This update primarily targets both covered and stilt parking areas and is based on the Unit Area Value (UAV) system—a method used to calculate property taxes by considering the property’s location, usage type, and built-up area. BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath introduced the proposal last month, seeking public feedback within a seven-day window. The new system aims to create a more uniform and transparent taxation policy, especially for private parking spaces that were of-

ten inconsistently taxed under the previous framework. While this revision may bring some benefits to commercial establishments such as shopping malls—thanks to a clearer, standardized valuation—experts believe residential property owners, particularly apartment dwellers with designated parking, may face a greater tax burden. The move is being seen as part of BBMP’s larger strategy to boost civic revenue and reduce discrepancies in tax collection across the city. According to civic analysts, while the updated UAV model simplifies tax calculations and improves compliance, it could also place additional financial pressure on homeowners, especially those in areas classified un-

der higher tax slabs. The BBMP maintains that the revision will ultimately help streamline municipal revenue and improve urban infrastructure, but concerns remain over the lack of awareness and sudden implementation of the policy. Residents are advised to review the new UAV-based tax rates to understand how their annual property tax bills will change and ensure they are prepared for potential increases. As Bengaluru continues to urbanize rapidly, with more vertical residential complexes emerging, the impact of this revised parking tax policy could be significant, making it essential for property owners to stay informed and engaged with municipal regulations.

Can You Spot the Hidden Cat?

A new brain teaser has taken the internet by storm, daring users to spot a cleverly hidden cat in a messy, cluttered room. Shared widely across social media, particularly by the handle @piedpiperlko, the image has left countless viewers scratching their heads and zooming in repeatedly, trying to uncover the elusive feline hiding in plain sight. This viral optical illusion isn’t just a fun challenge – it’s a test of sharp vision, attention to detail, and perceptual agility. At first glance, the room appears to be an everyday, chaotic living space filled with scattered books, pillows, furniture, and miscellaneous objects. But somewhere in this visual chaos lies a cat, expertly camouflaged among the items. The teaser has prompted users to jokingly claim they’ve unlocked “superhuman vision” upon finding the pet, while others are left stumped after several attempts. Brain teasers like this one are more

than just internet fun—they actively engage the brain, enhance focus, and sharpen cognitive skills. Optical illusions, in particular, manipulate how our eyes and brain interpret visual cues, creating a fascinating disconnect between perception and reality. The challenge has sparked online debates and shared frustration as users attempt to beat the illusion, some claiming to see the cat instantly while others take minutes. The hidden cat teaser serves as a reminder that sometimes the obvious can be the hardest to see, and even a simple image can become a complex puzzle when framed just right. Whether you find the cat in seconds or stare at the image for ages, the viral post proves once again that our brains love a good mystery—and that not everything is as it first appears. So, are you ready to put your observation skills to the test and prove you have “superhuman” vision?



RCB Pile Up 221 Against MI as Patidar, Kohli Shine

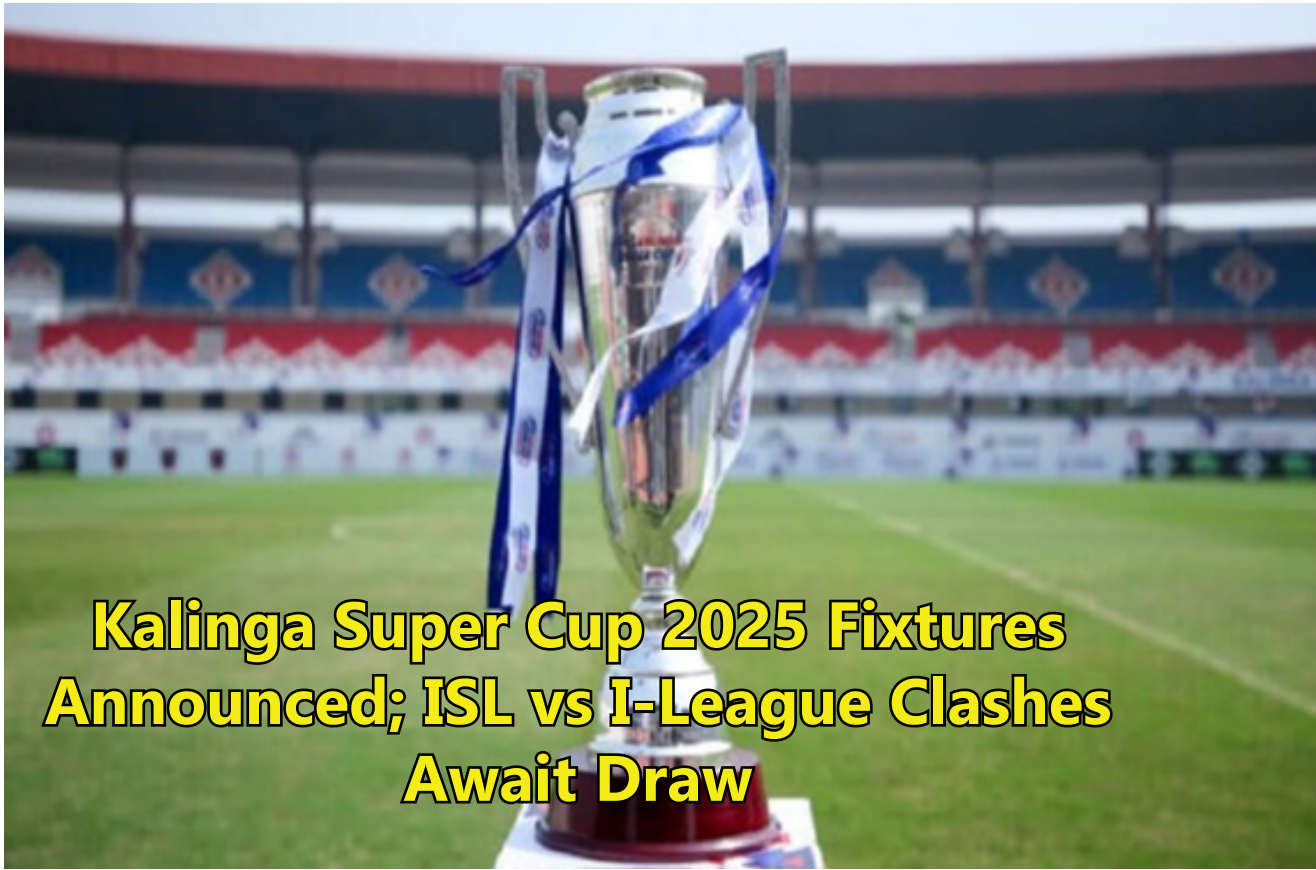


Royal Challengers Bengaluru posted a formidable 221/5 against Mumbai Indians in their IPL 2025 clash at the Wankhede Stadium on Monday. Skipper Rajat Patidar led from the front with a blistering 64 off 32 balls, while Virat Kohli anchored the innings with a fluent 67 from 42 deliveries. Devdutt Padikkal added quick runs with a 22-ball 37, setting a strong platform.

The late onslaught came from Jitesh Sharma, who smashed 40 off just 19 balls after arriving in the 15th over, propelling RCB to a powerful finish. Despite the onslaught, returning pacer Jasprit Bumrah stood out for MI, conceding only 29 runs in his four overs. MI will now need a strong response to chase down the challenging total in what promises to be a high-scoring thriller.

Dream Sports Championship Football 2025 Kicks Off in Goa

The Dream Sports Championship Football 2025 National Finals kick off on April 8 in Goa, with Dempo SC facing Chennaiyin FC in the tournament opener. The boys' finals feature eight teams, split into two groups, including top academies like Mohun Bagan, Reliance Foundation, and international invitees Norwich City FC. This year marks a milestone with the inaugural girls' national finals, starting April 9, comprising eight state teams nominated by the AIFF. Group matches for boys are scheduled on April 8, 10, and 12, while girls play on April 9, 11, and 13. Matches will be held at SAG Benaulim and Utorda, with the grand finale on April 15 at Raia Football Ground. Organized by Dream Sports Foundation, the championship promises a platform for India's top young football talent.



Kalinga Super Cup 2025 Fixtures Announced; ISL vs I-League Clashes Await Draw

The Kalinga Super Cup 2025 will be held from April 20 to May 3 at the Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, featuring 16 teams—13 from the ISL and 3 from the I-League (Churchill Brothers, Inter Kashi, Gokulam Kerala). The I-League clubs will take on the top three ISL seeds—Mohun Bagan SG, FC Goa, Bengaluru FC, with those pairings to be drawn on April 9. The Champion's Prize: Spot in 2025-26 AFC Champions League Two (Preliminary Round) Defending Champions: East Bengal FC Stay tuned for the I-League vs ISL draw results on April 9!

Inter Kashi Stun Rajasthan United to Stay in I-League Title Race



Inter Kashi pulled off a dramatic 3-1 win over Rajasthan United at the Kalyani Municipal Stadium to keep their I-League 2024-25 title hopes alive. Prasanth Karuthadathkuni opened the scoring in the 12th minute, but Rajasthan's Alain Oyarzun equalised in the 69th. With the match seemingly headed for a draw, Inter Kashi struck twice in stoppage time — David Humanes Munoz in the 90+4th minute and Matija Babovic in

the 90+7th — to snatch victory. Inter Kashi finish the league with 39 points, one behind leaders Churchill Brothers, and now await the AIFF Appeals Committee's verdict on their match against Namdhari FC. Meanwhile, title rivals Gokulam Kerala crashed out after a 3-4 defeat to Dempo SC. The win capped a thrilling end to Inter Kashi's season, marked by resilience and high-stakes drama.

Phantom Stars Clinch Inaugural TTSL Maharashtra Title; Teen Talents Shine Bright



Phantom Stars dominated the Table Tennis Super League (TTSL) Maharashtra 2025, emerging as unbeaten champions after a 14-8 win over PBG Pune Jaguars in the final at NSCI, Mumbai. The team won all seven ties across the league and knockout stages, powered by standout performances from Deepit Patil, Arnav Kshirsagar, and Onkar Jog. The league also highlighted emerging stars, with Divyanshi Bhowmick (PBG Pune Jag-

uars) and Prateek Tulsani (Mumbai Mozartt) named Best Women's and Men's Players overall. Bhowmick, just 14, remained undefeated in singles and doubles despite her team finishing runners-up. Mumbai Mozartt secured third place after a spirited comeback against Century Warriors. With a prize pool of ₹6.25 lakh, TTSL Maharashtra—an initiative by Ultimate Table Tennis—offered a professional platform for Maharashtra's brightest young paddlers and grassroots talent.

National Women's Archery Tournament to Celebrate 150th Birth Anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda

The first-ever Adi Shakti – National Women's Archery Competition will take place from April 8–10, 2025, at Ambaji in Gujarat's Banaskantha district, to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsa Munda. Held under the motto "Sankalp ni Shakti thi Safalta na Shikhar par" (From the Power of Resolve to the Pinnacle of Success), the tournament will showcase the talents of women archers from across India. Key Highlights: • Event Name: Adi Shakti – National Women's Archery Competition

- Dates: April 8–10, 2025
- Venue: GMDC Ground, Ambaji, Gujarat
- Participants: 550 women archers from 28 states and 8 Union Territories
- Categories: Recurve and Compound
- Prize Money: ₹41.52 lakh total across both categories
- Cultural Touch: Over 100 local artists will perform devotional acts to honor the divine presence of Goddess Amba, blending tradition with sport in the holy town of Ambaji, a revered Shaktipeeth.

Legacy & Future: The tournament will now be held annually in Gujarat, signifying a major boost to the state's sporting identity and ambitions to emerge as a national sports hub.





Samantha Stuns in Saree Comeback



Samantha Ruth Prabhu made a show-stopping return to traditional wear, proving that sarees aren't just for festive occasions. In a rare and refreshing appearance, she donned a stunning cream saree paired with a chic golden midriff belt, effortlessly highlighting her silhouette. The ensemble was equal parts minimal and majestic. Her understated styling—soft open hair and simple golden earrings—elevated the look with quiet confidence. No dramatic flair, no over-the-top accessories—just pure elegance and poise. This appearance

wasn't just a fashion moment; it was a statement. Samantha reminded everyone that simplicity, when paired with confidence and grace, can be just as powerful as a bold couture look. Her saree comeback was subtle yet unforgettable—and absolutely worth the wait. Samantha Ruth Prabhu made a show-stopping return to traditional wear, proving that sarees aren't just for festive occasions. In a rare and refreshing appearance, she donned a stunning cream saree paired with a chic golden midriff belt, effortlessly highlighting her silhouette.

The ensemble was equal parts minimal and majestic. Her understated styling—soft open hair and simple golden earrings—elevated the look with quiet confidence. No dramatic flair, no over-the-top accessories—just pure elegance and poise. This appearance wasn't just a fashion moment; it was a statement. Samantha reminded everyone that simplicity, when paired with confidence and grace, can be just as powerful as a bold couture look. Her saree comeback was subtle yet unforgettable—and absolutely worth the wait.

Akhil 6 Surprise on His Birthday



Akhil Akkineni turns 31 on April 8, and fans are in for a birthday treat! The makers of his next film, tentatively titled Akhil 6, have planned a grand reveal to celebrate. Directed by Murali Kishor Abburu and produced by Sithara Entertainments and Annapurna Studios, the film's intense pre-look poster has already sparked excitement. The poster features Akhil holding a silver dagger, with the tagline: "No war is more violent than love." This powerful line hints at an emotional, action-driven storyline. The official title glimpse will drop on his birthday, adding to the buzz. Music for the film is composed by Thaman S. Akhil 6 marks Akhil's return after Agent (2023), as he aims to deliver a gripping cinematic experience that blends love, war, and raw emotion.



Charan's PEDDI Hits a Naatu Sixer

Ram Charan teams up with *Uppena* director Buchi Babu Sana for *PEDDI*, a rural action drama that's already generating major buzz. Unveiled on Charan's birthday, the title and first-look posters received an overwhelming response. Now, the *First Shot Glimpse*, released on Sri Rama Navami, takes the hype up a notch. The glimpse opens with a powerful scene—PEDDI striding into a crick-

et ground, beedi in mouth, bat over shoulder, met with roaring cheers. It's pure mass appeal. He dashes through fields with raw athleticism before launching a cricket ball with a thunderous swing, setting the tone for an explosive narrative. The visuals promise grit, strength, and



style—all wrapped in a rural backdrop. PEDDI is clearly not just a character—it's a storm in the making.

Bobby-Hrithik Project in the Works



As Bollywood increasingly collaborates with South Indian talent, Telugu directors are becoming hot property. With Sandeep Reddy Vanga's success setting the trend, another major name may soon join the league—director Bobby. Known for commercial blockbusters like *Waltair Veerayya* and *Daaku Maharaj*, Bobby is reportedly gearing up for his Bollywood debut. Post-*Daaku Maharaj*, he took a brief break and recently met superstar Hrithik

Roshan. Sources say Bobby pitched a story that Hrithik responded to positively. While the full script is still under wraps, the actor has given a preliminary green signal to the concept. If the project materializes, it could mark a powerful North-South collaboration and a fresh cinematic experience for fans. All eyes are now on whether Bobby's next big update will be his official Bollywood entry—with Hrithik in the lead.

Tom Cruise's Final Mission Begins

Tom Cruise returns in *Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning*, the eighth and possibly final chapter in the iconic spy franchise. The newly released trailer delivers a thrilling mix of nostalgia and danger, showcasing Cruise's Ethan Hunt hanging off a WWII plane and even passing out mid-stunt. As the world faces chaos from a rogue AI called "The Entity," Ethan gathers his team for one last, desperate mission. The trailer revisits memorable stunts and emotional milestones from previous films, hinting at deep betrayals and compromised loyalties. A chilling voice-over declares, "Everything you were, everything you've done, has come to this." With the odds stacked im-



possibly high, Ethan's final mission could be his most dangerous yet—if he choos-

es to accept it. Fans are in for a spectacular, high-stakes sendoff.