



# Saraswati Pushkaralu Begins in Kaleshwaram

**TPN Correspondent | Bhupalpalli**  
The sacred Saraswati Pushkaralu began with grandeur at Kaleshwaram, a major pilgrimage site in Telangana, on Thursday. Thousands of devotees took holy dips at the Triveni Sangam where the Saraswati river flows alongside Godavari, Pranahita, and Antartavini rivers in Bhupalpalli district. This is the first Saraswati Pushkaralu celebrated since the formation of Telangana state. State Industries and IT Minister D. Sridhar Babu along with his family performed special pujas and took holy dips early Thursday. He expressed his happiness at witnessing the large gathering and said the first holy bath by Sri Sri Sri Madhavananda Saraswati Ji added sanctity to the event. Chief Minister Revanth Reddy inaugurated the Saraswati Ghat in the evening and unveiled the idol of Goddess Saraswati, with several ministers joining the ceremony to officially launch the 12-day festivities.

The Endowment Department has arranged for the Pushkaralu, held once every 12 years. Pushkara hours started at 10:35 pm on Wednesday as Jupiter entered Gemini. Devotees will participate in rituals till May 26, including morning yagas from 8:30 to 11 am and evening Saraswati Navratna Mala Aarti from 6:45 to 7:35 pm. Cultural programs are held every evening. The state government allocated Rs. 35 crore for the event, covering ghat construction, drinking water, sanitation, and parking. TSRTC is running special buses to Kaleshwaram from across Telangana, expecting 1 to 1.5 lakh devotees daily.

**CM Revanth, Ministers Take Holy Dip**  
The Saraswati Pushkaram celebrations commenced on a grand spiritual note at the historic Kaleshwaram temple in Jayashankar Bhupalapally district on Thursday. The auspicious event,

**First Saraswati Pushkaralu after Telangana formation**  
**Thousands of devotees take holy dips at Triveni Sangam**  
**CM Revanth Reddy inaugurates Saraswati Ghat**

held once every 12 years, was marked by the participation of Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, who, along with key cabinet ministers, took a ceremonial dip in the sacred waters of the Triveni Sangam — the confluence of the Saraswati, Godavari, and Pranahita rivers. Accompanying the Chief Minister were Ministers Duddilla Sridhar Babu, Ponnam Prabhakar, and Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy, who also performed the holy dip and took part in the spiritual proceedings. The group later performed special pujas and offered aarti to River Saraswati, which is believed to spiritually flow as an invisible channel at this sacred site. Marking the occasion, CM Revanth Reddy unveiled a newly installed 10-foot statue of Goddess Saraswati within the temple premises, symbolizing wisdom and knowledge. He also inaugurated a newly constructed 86-room accommodation complex developed to provide better facilities for pilgrims visiting the Pushkaram.

## SC Warns CS, Officials in Kancha Gachibowli Land Case



**CJI-led bench slams Telangana govt over environmental violations**

**Officials warned of jail if damage not compensated**

**Next hearing adjourned to July 23**

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
The Supreme Court on Wednesday came down heavily on Telangana government officials over the Kancha Gachibowli land issue, warning that Chief Secretary and secretaries may face jail if concrete steps are not taken to compensate for environmental damage. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Justice BR Gavai made serious remarks during the hearing. The court questioned whether the government had obtained proper environmental clearances before proceeding with the construction activity. It also expressed displeasure over actions taken during the long weekend, suggesting they were carried out

to evade scrutiny. The CJI directed the state government to clearly spell out remedial measures for the damage caused and warned that any deviation from Supreme Court guidelines would not be tolerated. “If compensation steps are not taken, the CS and secretaries will have to go to jail,” the bench stated firmly. Meanwhile, the Telangana government’s counsel requested additional time to file a counter affidavit in response to the central agency’s report. Several lawyers also brought to the court’s attention the cases filed against students and whistleblowers who exposed irregularities in the land issue. While applications were submitted for quashing these cases, the CJI clarified that such matters cannot be heard under the current petition and advised that a separate petition be filed. The Supreme Court has now adjourned the hearing to July 23, giving the state a window to respond with appropriate actions and explanations.

## Hyderabad Metro Revises Fare From May 17



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## SC Seeks Telangana’s Reply on Ex-SIB Chief’s Bail

**Prabhakar Rao moved SC after HC rejected anticipatory bail**

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## “Are Nukes Safe With Pak?”

- **Rajnath Singh questions Pakistan’s nuclear safety**
- **Urges IAEA supervision of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons**
- **Defends Operation Sindoor as India’s strong anti-terror stance**



**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday raised serious concerns over Pakistan’s nuclear capability management, calling for global supervision of its nuclear arsenal. Speaking from Srinagar just days after India’s Operation Sindoor, Singh urged the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to intervene and supervise Pakistan’s nuclear weapons, citing the country’s “irresponsible” behavior. “From the land of Srinagar, I want to raise this question – are nuclear weapons safe in the hands of such an irresponsible and rogue nation?” Singh asked, criticizing Pakistan’s past threats and nuclear blackmail. His comments followed Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent assertion that India would no longer tolerate nuclear threats from across the border. Singh remarked, “The world knows our army’s aim is accurate, and when they hit, they leave the counting to the enemies. How strong India’s resolve against terrorism is can be seen by our response — we did not even care about their nuclear blackmail.” During his visit to the Army’s 15 Corps Headquarters in Srinagar, Rajnath Singh reviewed the overall security situation and examined the combat readiness of the Indian Armed Forces. He also inspected Pakistani artillery

shells used in recent attacks along the border and interacted with soldiers on the ground. The Defence Minister was accompanied by Jammu & Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. This marked Singh’s first visit to the Valley after India’s execution of Operation Sindoor — a targeted military strike in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) in retaliation to the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam that claimed the lives of Indian soldiers and civilians. Paying tribute to the martyred personnel, Singh said, “I bow to the supreme sacrifice of our brave jawans. I also pay respect to the innocent civilians who were killed and salute the valour of our injured soldiers.” Calling Operation Sindoor a “big commitment,” the Defence Minister emphasized, “We will go to any extent to end terrorism. Pakistan has to stop sheltering terrorists.” His strong remarks signal India’s firm posture not only against terrorism but also in questioning Pakistan’s nuclear accountability on an international platform.

## Sridhar Babu Seeks ₹100 Cr for Kaleshwaram

**Minister outlines plans during Saraswati Pushkaralu celebrations**

**TPN Correspondent | Jayashankar Bhupalpally**  
Minister Sridhar Babu on Wednesday highlighted the Telangana government’s extensive efforts in organizing the Saraswati Pushkaralu at Kaleshwaram from May 15 to 26. He said the event is being held with grandeur, spiritual fervor, and logistical precision. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony, the Minister said ₹40 crore has been sanctioned for the smooth conduct of the celebrations. Over the past three months,



officials from 19 different departments have worked in coordination to ensure hassle-free arrangements for pilgrims. A special “Tent City” has been set up to accommodate devotees and enhance their spiritual experience. A unique highlight this year is the Godavari Harathi being performed daily by Vedic scholars from Kashi at the Kaleshwara Mukteshwara Swamy temple — a first-of-its-kind initiative in the state.

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## Miss World Foot-Washing Sparks Outrage

- **Traditional ritual at Ramappa Temple triggers cultural sensitivity**
- **Critics call it “colonial,” “casteist,” and “racist”**
- **Political leaders demand apology**
- **Some defend it as a customary practice**



**TPN Correspondent | Telangana**  
A video showing Miss World 2025 contestants participating in a foot-washing ceremony at Telangana’s Ramappa Temple has sparked widespread outrage and political criticism across India. The ritual, part of a cultural tour organised by Telangana Tourism ahead of the Miss World finale in Hyderabad on May 31, shows local women pouring water

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# Seethakka Urges Unity And Humanity In Religion

- Minister attends pastors’ meet in Secunderabad
- Stresses service over religious propaganda
- Calls for secular harmony in society

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Minister Seethakka participated as the chief guest at the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Pastors’ Conference held at Harihara Kala Bhavan in Secunderabad. Addressing the gathering, she praised the pastors for coming together for a good cause and emphasized the importance of uniting religion with humanity for the welfare of the world. “It is commendable that all the pastors have come together with a shared purpose. Religion gains value only when it is paired with humanity. No matter whose beliefs one follows, love for fellow human beings should be at the core,” Seethakka said. Urging religious leaders not to let politics divide faiths, she stated that our country was built on a secular foundation by our ancestors, ensuring equal respect for all religions. “Whichever god someone believes in, they should have the freedom to worship freely. It is foolish to claim that we must love only one religion above all,” she added.



She reminded that religion and humanity are not separate entities. People gravitate towards faiths that uphold humanity, she said, calling on everyone to go beyond religious preaching and focus on service to others. “Service to humanity is the best form of worship,” the minister declared. Citing the work of Dr. Thomas, who has been serving the poor while remaining steadfast in his faith, she said that religious groups should collaborate for the health and well-being of the people. “Even though we never met Mahatma Gandhi or Dr. Ambedkar in person, their service and teachings continue to inspire us. Similarly, our actions today should be remembered for generations,” she said. Seethakka concluded her address by encouraging all citizens, regardless of religion, to participate in civic service. “Even if we cannot sacrifice our lives for society, we must at least serve our fellow people,” she urged.

# Miss World Contestants Visit Yadadri

Participated in Jyoti Prajwalan Program

TPN Correspondent | Bhuvanagiri

Miss World contestants visiting Telangana took part in a special spiritual event at the famous Yadagirigutta Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Bhuvanagiri district on Thursday evening. The contestants, transported in eco-friendly battery-operated vehicles from the temple guest house, participated in the Jyoti Prajwalan program held at the Akhanda Deeparadhana Mandapam, a sacred ritual symbolizing light and devotion. The event was attended by notable officials including Government Whip Beerla Ilayya, District Additional Collector Veera Reddy, Revenue Divisional Officer Krishna Reddy, and Temple Assistant Executive Officer Bhaskar. To ensure the safety of the dignitaries and visitors, the Octopus Force, Telangana Special Police Force, and Temple Security Personnel Force main-



tained tight security throughout the program. Meanwhile, contestants from 25 African countries visited the renowned tourism village of Pochampally, famous worldwide for its exquisite Ikkat sarees. The local community warmly welcomed the guests, who showed great interest in the traditional handloom weaving process. Some contestants even tried their hands at weaving, expressing delight at experiencing the craft firsthand. This visit highlighted the rich cultural heritage of Pochampally’s handloom industry and brought global attention to Telangana’s traditional arts.

# Case on Bellamkonda Srinivas

Tollywood hero booked for wrong route driving

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Tollywood actor Bellamkonda Sai Srinivas has landed in legal trouble after an incident at Jubilee Hills in Hyderabad. The Jubilee Hills Police have registered a case against the young hero for driving his car on a wrong route and allegedly misbehaving with a traffic constable who stopped him. The incident occurred near the Journalist Colony area, where Srinivas was caught driving in the opposite direction. When a traffic constable stopped his vehicle and questioned his actions, the actor reportedly behaved inappropriately and then drove off. A video of the incident has since gone viral on social media, drawing criticism over his behavior. Following the video’s circulation, police officials took action and booked a case against Srinivas under relevant sections. The case has



been formally registered at the Jubilee Hills Police Station, and further investigation is underway. Bellamkonda Sai Srinivas, known for his roles in action films, is currently working on four upcoming projects titled Bhairavam, Tyson Naidu, Hindava, and Kishkindhapuri. Despite his busy schedule, this controversy may bring unwanted attention at a crucial point in his career.

# Sajjanar slams pranks targeting RTC employees

TPN Correspondent | Telangana

Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) Managing Director VC Sajjanar has strongly condemned the growing trend of social media pranks that target RTC staff. Expressing serious concern, Sajjanar made it clear that creating nuisance in RTC buses and premises for the sake of online fame will not be tolerated, and those indulging in such antics will face legal consequences. Sajjanar responded sharply after a video surfaced online showing a young man pulling a prank on an RTC bus conductor. Sharing the video himself, Sajjanar questioned, “Is this some crazy comedy? Is gaining social media fame more important than respecting hardworking



public servants?” He criticized individuals who have been intentionally disturbing RTC employees while they perform their duties, just to record viral content. “Causing discomfort to sincere RTC staff and passengers for cheap popularity is unacceptable. RTC is not a stage for social media stunts,” he asserted. Warning pranksters and content creators, Sajjanar said the RTC, in coordination with the police department, will initiate strict legal action if such behavior continues. He appealed to the public to behave responsibly and not to hurt the morale of dedicated employees who are the backbone of the public transport system.

# Telangana Braces For Another Week Of Heavy Rains

TPN Correspondent | Telangana

Telangana is set to witness another week of heavy rains accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Hyderabad, issuing an orange alert for Hyderabad and several other districts in the state. The inclement weather is expected to continue till Tuesday, May 20. According to the forecast issued on Thursday, gusty winds ranging from 50 to 60 kmph are expected in Hyderabad and surrounding districts, prompting authorities to urge people to remain cautious. The alert also warns of intense spells of rain, thundershowers and lightning. The districts under orange alert for the next three to four days include Nirmal, Nizamabad, Vikarabad, Sangareddy, Medak, Kamareddy, Mahabubnagar, Nagarkurnool, Wanaparthy, Narayanpet, Jogulamba Gadwal, Jagtial, Rajanna Sircilla, Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Rangareddy, Hyderabad, and Medchal-Malkajgiri. In addition to these, almost all remaining districts including Adilabad, Kumarambheem Asifabad, Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Mulugu, Mancherial, Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Mahabubabad, Warangal, Hanamkonda, Jangaon, Siddipet and Yadadri Bhongir are also likely to experience thunderstorms with lightning, gusty winds of 40 to 50 kmph, and occasional hailstorms. Hyderabad and its neighboring areas, including Medchal-Malkajgiri and Rangareddy districts, experi-



enced overnight thunderstorms, strong winds and cloudy skies. Some districts witnessed intense rainfall, with Sangareddy’s Kohir recording 94.3 mm of rainfall between Wednesday night and Thursday morning. Other significant rainfall figures include Tekmal (Medak) with 89.5 mm, Chandampet (Nalgonda) 80 mm, Pulkal (Sangareddy) 75.8 mm, and Kadthal (Rangareddy) 69.5 mm. In Hyderabad, heavy thunderstorms lasting up to 25 minutes were reported across several locations. Areas such as Rajendranagar, Attapur, Charminar, Aramghar, Chandrayangutta, Mehdiapatnam, Tolichowki, Shaikpet, Banjara Hills, Jubilee Hills, Madhapur, Gachibowli and Narsingi witnessed active storm activity. Regions under Serilingampally mandals were also affected. Northern and north-eastern parts of the city, including Secunderabad, Trimulgherry, Dr A S Rao Nagar, Kapra, ECIL, Nagaram, and Marredpally, reported early morning showers, adding to the widespread impact of the weather system. Authorities have advised residents across the state to remain alert, avoid unnecessary travel during storm hours, and stay updated with official weather warnings.

# E-Passports Now Issued In Hyderabad

Hyderabad among 12 cities selected for pilot issuance

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

The central government has officially launched the issuance of e-passports under the Passport Seva Pragmatism (PSP) Version 2.0, and Hyderabad is among the 12 cities selected for the pilot phase. These modern passports, embedded with advanced technology, are expected to significantly enhance security and expedite the verification process for international travelers. The e-passport features a built-in antenna and a small RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) chip integrated into the cover. This chip securely stores the holder’s biometric and personal information. A unique gold-coloured symbol under the front cover indicates that the passport is an e-passport. The data on the chip is protected through Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) encryption to prevent misuse. Apart from Hyderabad, the pilot issuance is currently underway in Nagpur, Raipur, Bhubaneswar, Goa, Jammu, Amritsar, Shimla, Jaipur, Chennai, Surat, and Ranchi. The Regional Passport Office in Chennai began rolling out e-passports in March last year and has issued 20,729 e-passports in Tamil Nadu alone as of March 22, 2025. Officials clarified that existing passports do not need to be converted into e-passports. All traditional passports will remain valid until their expiry. Switching to the new format is purely voluntary for now. The government plans to expand the issuance of e-passports to the rest of the country soon, offering Indian citizens a passport solution that is both secure and efficient for global travel.

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# Miss World Foot-Washing Sparks Outrage

from brass pots over the contestants’ feet and assisting with towels. Officials said the practice is a traditional custom performed before entering the temple, but social media users and journalists have condemned it as a “masterclass in colonial hang-over and white worship.” Several called it “disgusting” and “racist,” while others saw it as casteist and demeaning. Senior BRS MLA P Sabitha Indra Reddy described the act as “wicked, shameful, and highly despicable,” demanding an apology from the Telangana government. BRS working president KT Rama Rao criticized the state

government, and senior leader Y. Sathish Reddy termed the incident a “national insult,” questioning whether it represented empowerment or servitude. However, some netizens defended the ritual as a respectful cultural tradition, clarifying that local women poured the water, and noted that a contestant was seen giving a towel to a local woman to wipe her feet. The Telangana government has not yet responded officially to the controversy, which has ignited a broader discussion about cultural representation and the appropriateness of traditional practices in contemporary events.

# Sridhar Babu Seeks ₹100 Cr for Kaleshwaram

Sridhar Babu emphasized the government’s commitment to temple development across Telangana. He appealed to Chief Minister Revanth Reddy to allocate ₹100 crore and approve a special master plan to promote Kaleshwaram as a major spiri-

tual tourism hub in light of the upcoming Godavari Pushkaralu. He also urged the CM to take up development works at Ramagiri Fort in the Manthani constituency and sought continuous support for the region’s growth and tourism infrastructure.



# CM Revanth Warns CE Ramana Reddy

TPN Correspondent |  
Telangana

Chief Minister Revanth Reddy issued a stern warning to Mahabubnagar District Irrigation Department Chief Engineer Ramana Reddy during a high-level review on irrigation projects held Wednesday night at Jalsaudha, Hyderabad. According to reliable sources, Revanth cautioned the CE saying, “If he does what he did there and repeats it here, I’ll file a case and throw him inside,” referring to Ramana Reddy’s earlier role in the Kaleshwaram project. The CM instructed that bills related to pipelines in the Narayanpet-Kodangal lift irrigation scheme must only be submitted after resolving

land acquisition and rehabilitation (R&R) issues and starting pump house construction. Revanth also reiterated that those named in Vigilance and Enforcement Department cases over irregularities in the Kaleshwaram barrages will face action, while assuring that uninvolved officials need not fear. He emphasized double-checking every step in project construction to avoid mistakes that could lead to vigilance cases. The CM urged officials to act responsibly to prevent future issues. Contract employees’ wage issues were also discussed. Revanth noted that contract hiring should be temporary and that a committee has been formed to review and recommend staffing needs. He as-



sured that ₹50 crore would be allocated monthly for pending operation and maintenance bills, and ₹75 crore for project maintenance. Proposals submitted during the meeting included ₹10 crore for the Valantari training institute, ₹10 crore for NGT-related works on the Gauravelli project, and ₹2,000 crore for the completion of the Devadula lift irrigation scheme.



## Sabitha Condemns Govt Over Miss World Foot-Washing Incident

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Former Minister and Maheshwaram MLA Sabitha Indra Reddy strongly condemned the Congress government over the humiliating incident involving Telangana girls at the Miss World event. She said the incident has brought disgrace not only to Telangana but also to women across India. Sabitha expressed deep sorrow that such a heinous act of disrespect happened in the land of brave women like Rani Rudramadevi, Sammakka, and Saralamma. She termed the act of washing and wiping the feet of Miss World contestants by Telangana girls as wicked, shameful, and extremely vile. She demanded an apology from the government to women worldwide for this humiliation. Sabitha questioned the contradictory message sent by the government, which claims to empower millions of women by making them self-reliant and enhancing their dignity, yet allows such disrespect. Highlighting the irony, she pointed out that while women in Telangana struggle to walk miles for drinking water, the government allowed foreign beauties’ feet to be washed and wiped with towels by local girls. She also criticized the government for failing to address the water crisis, stating that if KCR had resolved water issues through Mission Bhagiratha during his earlier tenure, the current situation is a regression. Sabitha warned that the Congress government would fall due to the suffering and humiliation of women. She urged the Chief Minister to immediately and unconditionally apologize to all women for this disgraceful incident.

## CM Revanth Should Honor Election Promises

**Former MP Boora Narsayya Goud demands immediate paddy procurement**

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

At a media conference held at the BJP state office in Hyderabad on May 15, former Bhuvanagiri MP Dr. Boora Narsayya Goud sharply criticized the Telangana state government led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy. He accused the government of neglecting farmers by prioritizing beauty contests over agriculture and failing to ensure timely procurement of crops. Goud condemned the handling of the Rabi paddy crop, revealing that while Telangana harvested approximately 1.3 crore metric tons of paddy, the government has procured only 43 lakh metric tons so far. He urged immediate purchase and movement of the remaining 87 lakh metric tons to protect farmers from crop damage caused by rains, sun exposure, and lack of adequate storage. He highlighted that the central government bears all costs related to procurement, while the Telangana government is acting merely as an intermediary. Turning to national security, Goud praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership and strategic brilliance, especially through “Operation Sindoor,” which dealt a decisive blow to Pakistan’s terror infrastructure without engaging in a costly war. He cited statistics showing a significant decline in terrorist incidents and casualties in India since 2014 and emphasized India’s rise as a top defense exporter. Goud also announced that the BJP will hold a ‘Manam Samit Deshak’ Tiranga rally on May 17 at Hyderabad Tank Bund to honor the sacrifices of soldiers, inviting people from all communities to participate. On the employee front, he criticized Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for breaking pre-election promises and neglecting the welfare of government employees. Goud accused the government of treating rightful demands for DA, GPF, and retirement benefits as blackmail and urged the Congress government to resign if it cannot govern responsibly.



# Youth Poets’ Meet On June 2 By Telangana Jagruti

MLC Kavitha unveils event poster for Telangana Formation Day

Poets under 35 can submit entries in four languages

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Telangana Jagruti has announced that it will be organizing a special youth poets’ meet on June 2nd to mark Telangana Formation Day. The announcement was made by Telangana Jagruti president and MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha, who unveiled the event poster at her residence on Thursday. The program will take place at the Telangana Saraswata Parishad. Speaking on the occasion, MLC Kavitha said the gathering is intended to reflect the uniqueness of Telangana life and ignite literary passion and awareness among young people. She urged the youth poets to channel their creativity to represent Telangana’s history, culture, brotherhood, tolerance, and collective strength through their poetry. Participants in the event must be below 35 years of age, and poems can be presented in Telugu, Hindi, English, or



Urdu. Interested poets should register by emailing their details to kavitha.telangana@gmail.com before the 26th of this month. Kavitha called on participants to highlight the stories of Telangana’s first and second phase of the movement, underlining the spirit of struggle and sacrifice. She recalled that Telangana’s literary heritage is filled with inspiring poets and writers who awakened social consciousness through their words. She mentioned that Suravaram Pratap Reddy captured the self-respect of Tel-

angana’s literary community through the Golkonda Kavula Sanshik and that this upcoming event continues that legacy. However, MLC Kavitha expressed strong criticism of the current Congress-led state government for its alleged neglect of Telangana’s literary heritage. She condemned the government’s inaction in commemorating the centenary celebrations of poet Dasharathi, despite repeated appeals. She also expressed disappointment over the government’s indifference to Biruduraju, who dedicated his life to respecting people’s voices through literature and art. Poets Kanchanapalli, Vanapatla Subbaiah, Ghanapuram Devender, and Jagruti leaders including Naveen Achari, Sridhar Rao, Manoj Goud, and Lalitha Yadav also participated in the event.

## SC Seeks Telangana’s Reply on Ex-SIB Chief’s Bail

Prabhakar Rao moved SC after HC rejected anticipatory bail  
Rao accused in phone tapping case, now in the US  
Telangana govt says he’s evading probe for a year



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Supreme Court has issued notices to the Telangana government in response to a petition filed by T Prabhakar Rao, the former Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) chief, seeking anticipatory bail in the phone tapping case. The development comes after the Telangana High Court rejected his bail plea, prompting Rao to approach the apex court. A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma took up the petition. During the hearing, senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, appearing for the Telangana government, informed the court that Prabhakar Rao has been evading investigation for nearly a year and is currently in the United States. He also revealed that Rao’s passport has been cancelled. Justice Nagarathna questioned how Rao could return to India without a valid passport. In response, Luthra explained that the central government could issue a one-time entry passport if necessary. He further added that a Red Corner Notice had been issued against Rao. Rao’s counsel, senior advocate Dama Seshadri Naidu, argued that his client was not an accused when he left the country and should not be penalised for being abroad. However, the state’s lawyer countered that Rao departed India immediately after the FIR was filed, raising suspicion about his intent. The Supreme Court has now adjourned the matter, seeking a detailed response from the Telangana government before proceeding further.

## Bandi Sanjay Slams CM Over Fee Reimbursement

₹8,000 crore arrears hurting colleges, students  
Many degree colleges shut down across Telangana



TPN Correspondent | Telangana

Union Minister and BJP leader Bandi Sanjay has written a strong letter to Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, expressing sharp criticism over the delay in clearing fee reimbursement arrears. In the letter, he accused the Congress government of betraying lakhs of students and private college staff, and warned that continued neglect will lead to a collapse of trust in the administration. Bandi Sanjay questioned the status of CM Revanth’s earlier promise — made as a witness in the Assembly — to clear all arrears in a single go and later in 12 installments. He pointed out that the state now owes ₹8,000 crore due to prolonged inaction, creating serious problems for both educational institutions and students. He stated that many private college managements are unable to pay salaries and allowances to their teaching and non-teaching staff. “Several degree and engineering colleges have already been forced to shut down due to the pending dues,” he noted. He also warned that the future of lakhs of students is at stake, as institutions are withholding certificates from those who haven’t cleared their fees due to the non-payment of government reimbursements. “Conflicts between students and college managements are increasing. In some cases, police complaints are being filed. Has the government forgotten its commitment to release payments on time from this academic year itself?” he asked. Highlighting the collapse in the education sector, the Union Minister cited Satavahana University, where dozens of degree colleges have shut their doors in recent months. He alleged that the Congress government’s negligence is causing not only financial hardship but also mental stress to students and educators alike. Bandi Sanjay concluded by urging CM Revanth Reddy to act immediately: “For the sake of the students’ future and the survival of college managements, the government must clear the fee reimbursement arrears without any further delay.”



# Hyderabad Metro Revises Fare From May 17

New minimum fare set at ₹12 for up to 2 km

Maximum fare of ₹75 for journeys beyond 24 km

First fare hike since launch to meet operational costs

**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**  
Passengers travelling via Hyderabad Metro Rail will have to shell out more starting May 17, 2025, as the Metro Rail authorities have announced a revised fare structure. The decision comes as part of a long-pending update proposed by the Fare Fixation Committee (FFC) consti-

tuted under the Metro Railways (Operation & Maintenance) Act, 2002. As per the revised structure, the minimum fare for travel up to 2 km will be ₹12. The fare increases progressively based on distance, with passengers travelling between 2–4 km paying ₹18, and those covering 4–6 km paying ₹30. For a commute of 6–9 km,

the fare will be ₹40, while 9–12 km will cost ₹50. Longer travel distances in the city will now attract higher fares, with the revised rates set as follows: ₹55 for distances between 12 to 15 kilometers, ₹60 for 15 to 18 kilometers, ₹66 for 18 to 21 kilometers, ₹70 for 21 to 24 kilometers, and ₹75 for any journey above 24 kilometers.

This revision marks the first fare hike since Hyderabad Metro began its operations. The officials clarified that the updated rates are based on the recommendations of the FFC, which was headed by a retired High Court judge and submitted its report on January 25, 2023. Under Section 37 of the Act, the committee's recommen-

dations are binding on the Metro Railway Administration. The updated fare system aims to strike a balance between maintaining financial viability and ensuring affordability for passengers. Officials said the move was necessary due to rising operational and maintenance costs, adding that the revised



fares are still within a reasonable range for the public. Commuters are advised to plan accordingly and check the new fare slab effective from May 17.

## NDPS Special Drive

Ganja, Drugs, Liquor Worth ₹3 Crore Seized

93 cases registered, 135 arrested in a week

557 kg ganja, hashish oil, alprozolam seized

₹25 lakh worth of non-duty paid liquor confiscated



**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**  
The week-long NDPS Special Drive launched under the leadership of Prohibition and Excise Commissioner C Hari Kiran and Enforcement Director Shahnawaz Qasim has yielded significant results across Telangana. Special teams from Enforcement, STF, and DTF conducted raids from the 8th to 14th of this month, leading to massive seizures of ganja, narcotics, and non-duty paid liquor (NDPL). During the drive, officials seized 557 kg of ganja, 313 grams of hashish oil, and 831 grams of alprozolam, with an estimated value of ₹3 crore. As many as 93 cases were registered and 135 individuals were arrested, while 44 vehicles used for illegal transport were also seized. Ganja was primarily seized from Kothagudam, Warangal Urban, Mahabubabad, Khammam, Shamshabad, Medchal, Malkajgiri, Secunderabad, and Hyderabad. Hashish oil was recovered in Medak, and alprozolam was found in Sangareddy, Shadnagar, and Medchal. Raids targeting non-duty paid liquor were concentrated in GHMC limits,

Shamshabad, Sarurnagar, Secunderabad, Vikarabad, Sangareddy, Nagarkurnool, Nirmal, Mancheri, and Adilabad. Authorities seized 711.6 liters of liquor (948 bottles), valued at approximately ₹25 lakh. A total of 55 cases were booked and 37 individuals were arrested in connection with the illegal liquor trade. "The government is committed to protecting youth from drug abuse,"



said Director of Enforcement Shahnawaz Qasim, IPS. He lauded the teams for their efforts and assured that similar raids would continue in the future to completely eradicate the ganja and drug menace in both GHMC and rural areas.

## RGIA Police Arrest Two for Passport and Visa Tampering

**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**

On 14th May 2025, the RGIA Police, along with the Special Operations Team (SOT) of Shamshabad Zone, arrested two accused persons involved in tampering passports and Gulf VISAs at Nampally, Hyderabad. The accused were found running an illegal human trafficking network that misled ECR passport holders to travel illegally to Gulf countries without the necessary POE (Protector of Emigrants) certificates and work contract documents. The case surfaced after Gandikota Venkata Ramana from West Godavari filed a complaint on 13th May, stating she and seven other women were deceived by agents Balaji Shiv Kumar and associates. They at-

tempted to send them to Kuwait via Muscat on tourist visas despite their ECR passports. At RGIA Hyderabad, officials found her Kuwait visa was stamped "CANCELLED," indicating passport tampering. The arrested accused are Chilukuri Balaji, a Gulf travel agent from Penugonda, West Godavari, and his associate Sunkara Shiva Kumar from Annamayya District. They operated under fake identities and ran a network that promised high-paying Gulf jobs but used forged documents and tampered visas to bypass immigration laws. Their modus operandi involved procuring fraudulent VISAs through sub-agents, tampering genuine work VISAs by stamping them "CANCELLED" to appear as tourist VISAs, and arranging med-



ical tests and accommodations near Hyderabad before sending victims to the airport. The accused charged each person ₹50,000 to ₹60,000, keeping a commission of ₹5,000 to ₹8,000. Authorities seized 14 tampered VISAs, 14 passports, 16 flight tickets, stamps, stamp pads, mobile phones, and a laptop from the accused. Two main agents, Satyanarayana and Anji @

Penegalapati Ramanjaneyulu, remain absconding. The efforts of Inspector Sanjay Kumar, Inspector J. Balaraju, Inspector K. Balaraju, Sub-Inspectors Tarun Reddy and U.K. Siddeshwar, Police Constables Anjeneyulu, Vamshi Krishna, Johnson, K. Shiva Kumar, P. Dharma Reddy, and K. Ravi Kumar under the guidance of DCP B. Rajesh and others have been commended.

## Rowdy Sheeter Ayan Qureshi Murdered in Nampally



**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**

A brutal murder took place in the Nampally area of Hyderabad when rowdy sheeter Ayan Qureshi was attacked and killed near MNJ Cancer Hospital. Qureshi, who hailed from Chandrayangutta, was returning from his court appearance in Nampally when five unidentified assailants, who had been hiding nearby, suddenly attacked him. The assailants first beat him severely with a cricket bat and then slit his throat with knives, stabbing him repeatedly in the stomach, resulting in his death. The attackers fled the scene, leaving behind the weapons used in the murder. On receiving information, Nampally police arrived promptly and collected evidence with the help of the clues team. The body was sent to Osmania Hospital for postmortem. The police have registered a murder case and launched a manhunt to apprehend the accused.

## Fake Certificate Racket Busted in Hyderabad

**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**

The West Zone Task Force of the Commissioner's office, in coordination with Masab Tank police, busted a fake educational certificate racket and arrested three individuals involved in providing counterfeit certificates to job seekers and dropouts in Hyderabad. Authorities seized 15 fake educational certificates during the operation. The accused—Shaibaz Khan (29), Mohammed Abdul Ismail (30), and advocate Kadari Ramesh (52)—were found supplying fraudulent certificates from various universities like Glocal University and Monad University. Shaibaz Khan was first arrested at his residence where fake certificates were recovered. He confessed to receiving them from Ismail, who in turn revealed his source as Ramesh, who acted as a facilitator linking clients to certificate suppliers. Ramesh disclosed that the certificates originated from a person named Sagar in Delhi, who manages a large network distributing counterfeit degrees, including engineering and other fields. This racket exploits the demand from unemployed youth seeking jobs or overseas



opportunities, charging higher fees for urgent or specific certificate needs. Transactions were facilitated through online payments between Ramesh and Sagar. The seized items included various degree certificates, semester-wise memos, cash of Rs 8,000, and three mobile phones. The police continue to investigate this extensive scam to dismantle the entire network and urge educational and employment institutions to strengthen verification processes.

## Bangladeshi Link Busted in Secunderabad Brothel Raid

**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**

A brothel racket involving Bangladeshi nationals was busted by the Commissioner's Task Force North Zone team and Gopalpuram Police on Tuesday at Oxford Street, Regimental Bazar, Secunderabad. In a coordinated raid, officials apprehended the brothel organizer, a Bangladeshi national supplying sex workers, a customer, and rescued two female victims—one of whom is also from Bangladesh. The case was registered under Cr. No. 92/2025 at Gopalpuram Police Station, under Sections 143, 144(2) BNS, Sections 3, 4, 5, and 7 of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, Section 12(1)(c) of the Passport Act, 1967, and Section 14A(b) of the Foreigners Act, 1946. The key accused arrested in the case include Bimal Sen alias Subrata Koley (36) – a native of West Bengal and main organizer, currently residing in Regimental Bazar, Secunderabad. Sakil Hossain

alias Mulla (29) – a native of Chittagong, Bangladesh, who acted as the supplier of sex workers. Sk. Nasir Ali (36) – a customer and chef by profession, from West Bengal.

Three others—Babu and Shika, both reportedly from Bangladesh but residing in Pondicherry, and Shiva from Ameerpet, Hyderabad—are absconding. The police seized 1 used and 1 unused condom, 6 mobile phones, ₹2,270 in cash and other material worth approximately ₹65,000

According to investigators, Bimal Sen had been running the brothel by recruiting female sex workers through Shiva, who in turn coordinated with his Pondicherry-based partners Babu and Shika. The women were supplied via



Sakil Hossain from Bangladesh. Sen advertised the services to customers over the phone and accepted payments both via phone-pay and in cash.

The raid was executed under the supervision of Sri Y.V.S. Sudheendra, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Task Force, Hyderabad City, by a team led by Inspector P. Raghavender (Task Force) and M. Madhu Kumar (Inspector, Gopalpuram PS), with SIs C. Raghavendra Reddy, Srinivasulu Dasu, and P. Gnanadeep.



# Licensed Surveyor Scheme To Be Implemented In Telangana

State to recruit 5,000 licensed surveyors

Applications open until the 17th of this month

Modelled after Karnataka’s successful system



**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**  
Revenue, Housing, Information and Public Relations Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy has announced that the Telangana government is preparing to implement a Licensed Surveyor Scheme similar to the one followed in Karnataka. This move aims to provide a permanent and transparent solution to land disputes and improve the efficiency of land transactions. The Minister stated that five thousand licensed surveyors will be recruited under this new scheme. Applications will be accepted until the 17th of this month, and eligible candi-

dates will undergo training at the Telangana Survey Training Academy. This initiative is part of broader reforms to deliver better services to farmers and ensure accurate land records. To support the policy, two senior officers from the Survey Department recently conducted a detailed study of Karnataka’s licensed surveyor system and submitted a report. The Telangana government is acting based on their recommendations. The Karnataka Licensed Surveyor Scheme, first introduced with amendments to the Karnataka Land Revenue Act in 1999 and implemented from

2005-06, ensures that a mutation sketch (PMS) is prepared prior to land registration. This sketch contains clear information about land boundaries, area, and title—greatly improving transparency and reducing land-related disputes. Currently, Karnataka employs 6,000 licensed and 4,000 government surveyors. On average, a licensed surveyor there receives 23 survey applications monthly, generating a monthly income of ₹25,000 to ₹30,000. These surveyors prepare pre-registration sketches, upload them to the designated portal, and their work is later verified and approved by se-

nior officials. Minister Srinivasa Reddy said that Telangana’s prestigious Land Act also emphasizes accurate land mapping during registration. He instructed officials to ensure the smooth implementation of this policy and to appoint surveyors based on the land transaction volume and area in each mandal. Highlighting the success in Karnataka, where licensed surveyors appointed nearly two decades ago are still active, the Minister emphasized that introducing the same system in Telangana will not only resolve land issues but also create significant employment opportunities, especially in rural areas.

## Chakrasnaam Performed In Bhadrachalam



**TPN | Anvesh Reddy**  
Bhadradri Kothagudem: As part of the ongoing Brahmotsavams at the Sri Yogananda Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Bhadrachalam, the temple priests performed the sacred Chakrasnaam ritual today with grandeur on the banks of the Godavari River. This revered temple, affiliated with the Sri Sita Ramachandra Swamy Temple in Bhadrachalam, witnessed a large turnout of devotees early in the morning. The priests began the proceedings with a Panchamruta abhishekam, a traditional ritual involving the sacred bath of the deity using five holy ingredients — milk, curd, honey, ghee, and sugar. The Chakrasnaam ceremony was carried out with deep spiritual fervor and adherence to temple traditions. Pilgrims and devotees from various parts of the region participated in the rituals, took holy dips, and offered prayers seeking blessings from the Swamy. The divine atmosphere and the riverbank setting added to the sanctity of the event, with chants and rituals echoing the devotional spirit of the Brahmotsavams. Temple officials expressed their gratitude to the devotees and local authorities for ensuring smooth conduct of the program.

## Farmers Protest Over Paddy Rejection in Medchal

**TPN Correspondent | Medchal**  
Farmers in Medchal protested at the Medchal Society Center, expressing frustration that the paddy they cultivated over six years across dry and rainy seasons was not being accepted by the society. Due to untimely rains, the paddy was spoiling, yet officials responsible for paddy collection refused to receive it, citing various excuses. The Medchal Agriculture Officer, Archana, who arrived at the society center following complaints, explained to the farmers that paddy could not be accepted because of the excessive amount of ropes mixed with the harvest. She advised farmers to bring paddy harvested without excess ropes. She also contacted rice mill owners, who said they would purchase paddy only if it contained 2-3 percent ropes, insisting on minimal rope content. Society Chairman Randeep Reddy confirmed the refusal to buy paddy due to excess ropes, urging farmers to comply with the requirement to bring rope-free paddy. Farmers faced additional challenges due to the unavailability of rope-measuring machines at the society centers. Medchal Mandal Congress Party President Ramana Reddy criticized the society centers and rice mill owners, stating their refusal to buy the harvested paddy was damaging the government’s image and burdening it unnecessarily. He urged officials to resolve the issue promptly to protect farmers’ interests.



## ITDA Officer Participates In Tribal Bhoomi Puja After 35 Years

*Villagers welcome B. Rahul with traditional honours*

**TPN Correspondent | Bhadrachalam**  
ITDA Project Officer B. Rahul expressed joy over the tribal communities’ commitment to preserving their age-old customs, as he participated in the festive Bhoomi Puja held at Rajiv Nagar village in Thimmampeta Gram Panchayat of Mulakalapalli Mandal on Thursday. The event was conducted in a grand traditional manner by the tribal elders, youth, and their families, who welcomed the officer according to tribal customs. The Bhoomi Puja was marked by a ritual where elders and youth worshipped a chicken egg with bows and arrows, offered it before their deity, and broke it with arrows, symbolizing the start of agricultural activity. Speaking on the occasion, B. Rahul praised the community for upholding the customs of worshipping land and seeds before cultivation, a practice believed to ensure good crop yield. The officer’s visit held added significance, as it marked the first time in 35 years that an ITDA Project Officer visited the village. Locals fondly recalled a similar visit decades ago by then-PO JC Sharma, who had also addressed their concerns at the time. The entire community gathered to express their delight and presented their long-pending issues to the officer. The tribals highlighted the lack of proper road access to their remote village, the need for electric motors for cultivation, and inadequate distribution of paddy land. In response, B. Rahul assured the villagers that necessary steps would be taken to resolve their problems. He promised to arrange road connectivity and motors through ITDA support and committed to conducting a comprehensive land survey to allocate paddy fields fairly to tribal farmers.



The villagers, moved by the officer’s participation in their festival and his promises, expressed their heartfelt appreciation. The women of the village also honoured the PO for establishing a tribal museum at Bhadrachalam ITDA office to promote tribal heritage. They remarked that it was a matter of great pride and good fortune that an IAS officer visited their village after so many years and genuinely listened to their issues.

## RTC Conductor Caught Using Fake Aadhaar for Plot Registration

**TPN Correspondent | Telangana**  
An RTC conductor was caught trying to register land plots using a fake Aadhaar card in Abdullapur. Kosireddy Bhaskar Reddy, along with his friend Kuruva Srinivas from Champapet, went to the sub-registrar’s office to register plots under the village revenue limits of Majeedpur in Abdullapur Met Mandal using forged documents. The sub-registrar identified the fake Aadhaar cards during the registration

process and immediately informed the police. Following this, the authorities apprehended the accused and handed them over to Abdullahpur police. The police have started an investigation into the case.

## Woman Electrocuted at Grain Purchase Center

**TPN Correspondent | Bhadradri Kothagudem**  
A tragic incident occurred in Marrigudem village under Annapureddypalli mandal of Bhadradri Kothagudem district, where a young woman lost her life due to an electric shock at a government grain purchase center. The deceased, Mamidala Remalli (20) of KCR Colony, Abbugudem village, had gone to work as a daily wage laborer at the center. The accident took place while the grain was being dried using an eastern palpating machine. As power was supplied to the machine, Remalli was electrocuted and died on the spot. Her sister and another female laborer working alongside her also received electric shocks and suffered minor injuries. Locals and fellow laborers allege that the accident was caused by negligence on the part of the authorities. They claimed that there was no permanent power supply to the machine and that temporary electrical arrangements were made every day. According to witnesses, workers typically use sticks to attach wires to the electric pole for power, and during this risky process, two wires accidentally touched, leading to the fatal shock. The injured were immediately rushed to Kothagudem Government Hospital in a 108 ambulance. The tragic death of Remalli has led to anger and grief among villagers, who are now demanding a proper investigation and accountability from the concerned officials to prevent such incidents in the future.

## CITU Call to Support Nationwide Strike on May 20



**TPN Correspondent | Medchal**  
To ensure the success of the nationwide general strike scheduled for the 20th of this month, a wall poster was unveiled at the Medchal Municipal Office under the banner of the Municipal Workers and Employees Union. Speaking at the event, CITU Medchal Mandal Convener Naresh criticized both the central and state governments for failing to provide adequate social security to over 75,000 municipal workers. These include workers employed under contract, outsourcing, NMR, fixed pay, and other systems across municipalities. He appealed to all categories of municipal employees to actively participate in the upcoming general strike, emphasizing that the strike is aimed at securing long-overdue rights and protections for municipal workers. Several CITU Municipal Workers Union leaders participated in the event, including Mallesh, Mamindla Mallesh, Lakshma Reddy, Gotimukula Raju, Swamy, Suresh, Ravi, Srinivas Reddy, Kothapalli Ravi, and Ramesh. The union leaders stressed the importance of unity among workers and called on all municipal staff to stand together in the fight for fair treatment, better wages, and social security benefits.



# CASTE CENSUS AND WAR RHETORIC

## Merging Aggressive and Progressive Hinduism for BJP's Political Gain

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) simultaneous endorsement of a caste census and assertive military posture against Pakistan marks a strategic fusion of seemingly opposing ideologies: caste-based inclusion and religious nationalism. Far from being contradictory, these moves signal a sophisticated reworking of Hindutva politics to consolidate a wider Hindu vote by merging caste diversity with majoritarian unity.

Traditionally, Hindutva ideologues denied the centrality of caste in Hindu identity, portraying it as a colonial construct or an aberration introduced by Islamic rule. Yet caste remains intrinsic to Hindu social identity. The demand for a caste census, long resisted by both Congress and BJP, is now being embraced as a political tool. Rahul Gandhi's sudden invocation of Kanshi Ram's slogan, *"Jiski jitni sankhya bhaari, uski utni hissedari,"* and BJP's abrupt support for caste enumeration before the Bihar elections, indicate its rising electoral importance.

Opposition parties hope to use caste data to highlight upper-caste dominance and push for greater representation of backward castes. However, BJP's



shift does not signify a dilution of Hindutva, but rather its adaptation. In the

face of growing backward-caste consciousness, BJP is redefining Hinduism

as a civil religion that includes lower castes, while maintaining its aggres-

sive stance against minorities.

Hindutva's nationalist project has always relied on a unifying enemy—most often the Muslim 'other'. This antagonism is both ideological and performative, reinforced through everyday bigotry and periodic military actions like the recent retaliation against Pakistan after the Pahalgam attack. It fosters a sense of Hindu unity that supersedes caste divisions.

In this context, the caste census functions less as a tool for dismantling caste hierarchies and more as a mechanism to manage diversity within a broader Hindu framework. While it may temporarily destabilize BJP's upper-caste base, it ultimately contributes to building a sublated Hinduism—one that is both aggressive in its nationalism and inclusive in caste.

This fusion creates a deeper ideological citizenship rooted in Hindu identity and sustained through the othering of non-Hindus. Thus, the caste census, far from undermining Hindutva, could reinforce its hold—making it an unlikely but potent ally in BJP's majoritarian project.

## Trump's Misguided Equivalence of India and Pakistan Undermines Diplomatic Credibility

Former U.S. President Donald Trump's recent comments on the India-Pakistan conflict following the Pahalgam terror attack reveal a troubling diplomatic posture that equates both nations, disregarding the stark contrast between a democratic India and a Pakistan that continues to sponsor cross-border terrorism. This false equivalence not only diminishes India's justified response to terrorism but also signals a lack of understanding of South Asia's complex geopolitical realities.

The Pahalgam attack, orchestrated by Pakistan-backed militants, occurred during U.S. Vice-President JD Vance's visit to India. Yet, despite condemnations from the U.S. and others, these statements hold little value without direct attribution of responsibility to Pakistan. Even the UN Security Council's statement, while calling for accountability, stopped short of naming Pakistan—a reflection of diplomatic limitations, given its current seat on the Council.

Trump's statements, including his offer to mediate the Kashmir issue and his boast of brokering a ceasefire be-



fore any official bilateral announcement, undermine India's sovereignty. Worse, they suggest India yielded to U.S. pressure, when in reality, India had carefully crafted a calibrated military response targeting only terror infrastructure, with built-in mechanisms for de-escalation.

The G7 statement mirrored this imbalance, urging both nations to exercise restraint and seek a diplomatic solution—again ignoring the root cause: Pakistan's use of terrorism as state policy. Calls for dialogue and de-escalation are meaningless if they overlook the repeated collapse of talks due to Pakistan's continued provocations.

Trump's rhetoric is not only diplomatically careless but

also potentially damaging to India-U.S. ties. His claim of threatening both countries with trade consequences and dangling future trade incentives is especially absurd given the disproportionate economic ties—India's \$200 billion trade relationship with the U.S. vastly outweighs Pakistan's \$7.4 billion.

India must reassess its approach to engaging with Trump's administration. Strategic pushback may be necessary to protect national interests and reaffirm that issues like Kashmir are bilateral, as agreed under the Simla Agreement. While the U.S. remains a critical partner, India cannot allow its security concerns to be trivialized under the guise of peace-brokering or misplaced neutrality.

## Beyond Obscenity: India Needs Smarter Speech Regulation, Not Blanket Bans

Late last month, a Supreme Court bench led by incoming Chief Justice BR Gavai urged the Union government to consider fresh legislation to curb obscene content on streaming platforms and social media. The concern is familiar: web series are undermining public morality, and social media is eroding our civic discourse.

Yet, this call for greater censorship ignores key legal and practical distinctions between media types. India's courts have long upheld nuanced views on free speech. In the AVEEK SARKAR case (2014), the Supreme Court ruled that a nude photo of Boris Becker was not obscene, noting it would not provoke lustful thoughts in the average person. But in 2025, nearly every provocative post or series is quickly labeled indecent or immoral, often with little regard for context.

At the center of the debate is the issue of platform asymmetry. Traditional TV broadcasts are subject to stricter content norms because of their family-oriented, one-size-fits-all nature. In contrast, digital media is personalized and privately consumed, often with tools



like age filters and parental controls. Recognizing this difference, India's 2021 streaming rules avoided imposing TV-style censorship on OTT platforms. Most advanced democracies similarly tailor their content standards to media type, acknowledging the role of user controls and private consumption.

Modern regulation, as global examples show, must prioritize harm reduction over offense avoidance. The UK's Online Safety Act focuses on "priority illegal content" like terrorism and child exploitation. Australia and Canada have similar laws targeting demonstrably harmful speech. None equate generic "offense" with real-world danger.

India should take a risk-based approach, focusing on curbing hate speech, child abuse material, and terrorism rather than lewd jokes or bold dialogue. Importantly, media literacy must be strengthened to build a resilient society. The EU and Canada invest in such initiatives; India's National Education Policy gestures toward it, but implementation remains weak.

Rather than chasing every risqué scene, India should invest in smarter enforcement, public education, and civil society collaboration. Obscenity may offend—but unchecked hate speech and extremism cause real, lasting harm. Let's protect free expression while targeting speech that truly endangers democratic life.

# India's Economy Poised to Withstand War-Like Challenges Amid Regional Tensions

As India emerges from a brief yet tense confrontation with Pakistan, attention is returning to economic matters, particularly growth prospects. Sanjiv Puri, President of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), recently expressed optimism that India can achieve a 6.5% growth rate in the fiscal year 2025–26, crediting the country's strong economic fundamentals. However, he also stressed the importance of setting more ambitious goals of 7–8% to secure long-term prosperity.

While Puri avoided directly referencing the border conflict, he acknowledged that geopolitical uncertainties are impacting investment flows. Sectors such as energy, transportation, chemicals, metals, and hospitality continue to attract interest, but investor confidence could waver if regional instability persists. Though the recent



hostilities lasted only a few days, the underlying issues remain unresolved. The ceasefire declared was fragile—marred by cross-border fire even on its announcement day.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement that Operation Sindoor has been "suspended" rather than concluded further underscores the uncer-

tainty. He warned that any renewed terrorist activity from Pakistan would invite swift retaliation. This ambiguous state of peace raises concerns about India's economic momentum, especially regarding foreign direct investment (FDI).

Companies like Apple are already shifting supply chains to India to avoid tariffs on Chinese exports, with CEO Tim Cook indicating that iPhones for the U.S. market will soon be sourced largely from India. Similar interest is rising under the "China Plus One" strategy. However, prolonged conflict could cast doubts over India's stability, a key attraction for multinational investors. Another concern is the security of critical infrastructure in the western states of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra—home to oil and gas

platforms and major manufacturing hubs. Any disruption in these regions could significantly impact national productivity.

Nonetheless, India's resilience remains a powerful asset. The country has previously weathered global disruptions like the Ukraine-Russia war and the COVID-19 pandemic. Inflation has remained under control despite external shocks, and the economy adapted by sourcing discounted crude from Russia.

While short-term disruptions, especially in the northern belt, may occur, the broader economic framework appears robust enough to absorb temporary shocks. India is likely to maintain its trajectory as a stable and growing economy, even amidst regional tensions.





**"Not A Spokesperson": Shashi Tharoor After Congress' 'Lakshman Rekha' Remark**  
TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor clarified on Thursday that his recent remarks on the India-Pakistan conflict were made in his personal capacity and not on behalf of the Congress party. The Lok Sabha MP from Thiruvananthapuram emphasized that he was speaking as "an Indian and a proud citizen" when he shared his perspective on the situation during interviews with international media.

Speaking to reporters, Tharoor said, "People seem to think I have knowledge on some of these subjects, so they ask me for my views. I always clarify that I am expressing my personal opinion, not the party line." His comments come amid reports that some Congress leaders believe he crossed the "Lakshman Rekha" — a metaphorical line implying overstepping boundaries — with repeated remarks on the sensitive issue.

Tharoor denied being aware of any formal criticism from the party. "I was present at the Congress Working Committee meeting and no such concern was raised while I was there. If something was said after I left, I haven't been informed yet. I'll respond if and when I am," he added.

Responding to party colleague Jairam Ramesh's recent remark that Tharoor is not the party's official spokesperson, Tharoor agreed, stating, "He is absolutely correct. I am not the party's communications in-charge, nor am I a spokesperson of the government."

He defended his decision to speak to foreign media, saying it was essential for India's narrative to be represented globally. "There was a relative lack of our viewpoint being heard internationally. When media from Europe, the US, and the Middle East approached me, I shared my view based on my understanding of India's position," he said.

Tharoor stressed that he had no access to classified information and was only offering informed analysis as someone familiar with global affairs. "People are free to disagree. But this is my view and I am entitled to it."

## Can Timelines Be Imposed?" President's Big Question To Supreme Court

### Seeks Clarification on Governors' Role in Bill Assent Process

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

A month after the Supreme Court's landmark verdict in the Tamil Nadu Bills case, President Droupadi Murmu has formally sought the Court's opinion on key constitutional questions concerning the role of Governors in clearing state legislation. Using her powers under Article 143 of the Constitution, the President asked whether timelines can be imposed on Governors for granting assent to Bills and if their discretion is subject to judicial review.

The query follows an April ruling by Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan, which found Governor RN Ravi's delay in clearing 10 Bills from the Tamil Nadu legislature to be "illegal and arbitrary." The Court had set a three-month deadline for Governors and the President to act on Bills re-passed by the legislature.

President Murmu's letter raises several constitutional concerns: Is the Governor bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers when dealing with Bills under Article 200? Can judicial timelines dictate how the President or Governors exercise discretion under Articles



200 and 201? And is such discretion justiciable, considering Article 361 grants immunity to the President and Governors from court proceedings?

The Supreme Court, in its earlier verdict, acknowledged that while its advisory opinion under Article 143 is non-binding, it holds significant constitutional value. The bench had emphasized that only constitutional courts can determine the legality of a Bill and that the executive must refrain from making such assessments.

The judgment also distinguished between political and legal considerations in assessing Bills. While courts avoid interfering in political matters, they may intervene when constitutional interpretation is required. It further noted that if the President withholds assent despite the Court's advice, reasons must be recorded. With newly sworn-in Chief Justice BR Gavai at the helm, the Court may now decide whether to constitute a Constitution Bench or affirm the two-judge ruling, potentially reshaping how federal legislative processes are handled in India.

## 10 Militants Killed in Gunbattle with Assam Rifles in Manipur's Chandel District

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

At least 10 militants were killed during a fierce encounter with an Assam Rifles unit in Manipur's Chandel district on Wednesday, May 14, officials confirmed. The operation, launched near the Indo-Myanmar border, is still ongoing, according to security forces.

The firefight took place near New Samtal village in the Khengjoy tehsil of Chandel district, a region known for frequent insurgent activity due to its proximity to the international border. The operation was initiated based on specific intelligence inputs regarding the movement of armed insurgent cadres in the area.

Eastern Command of the Indian Army shared an official statement on X (formerly Twitter), stating: "Acting on specific intelligence on the movement of armed cadres near New Samtal village, Khengjoy tehsil, Chandel district, close to



the Indo-Myanmar border, an Assam Rifles unit under Spear Corps launched an operation on May 14."

During the mission, the troops reportedly came under fire from the suspected militants. In response, the Assam Rifles personnel swiftly redeployed and returned fire in a measured and controlled manner. The well-coordinated counteraction led to the neutralisation of ten armed insurgents.

A significant cache of arms and ammunition was recovered from

the site following the encounter. Officials did not immediately provide details about the identities or affiliations of the deceased militants, although they are suspected to belong to insurgent groups operating in the region, some of which use the border areas for shelter and cross-border movement.

Security forces have cordoned off the area and a combing operation is underway to track any remaining militants and secure the region.

The Chandel district, which borders Myanmar, has historically been a hotspot for insurgent activity. Wednesday's operation underscores the continued challenges faced by security forces in maintaining stability in the northeastern state, which has seen periodic ethnic and insurgent violence.

Authorities are expected to release more information once the ongoing operation concludes and the area is fully secured.



**"Complicated, Nothing Decided Till": S Jaishankar On India-US Trade Deal**  
TPN Correspondent | Delhi

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar confirmed on Thursday that discussions for a comprehensive India-US trade deal are still ongoing, describing the process as "complicated" and cautioning that "nothing is decided till everything is." His comments come amid renewed trade tensions and evolving diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Speaking at the inauguration of Honduras' new embassy in New Delhi, Jaishankar emphasized that any trade agreement must be mutually beneficial. "It has to work for both countries. Until that is done, any judgment would be premature," he told reporters.

His statement follows claims by US President Donald Trump earlier in the day during a business forum in Doha, where Trump said India had offered a deal involving "literally no tariffs" on US goods. Trump has reimposed tariffs during his current term, including a 27% reciprocal tariff on India in April, which has since been suspended until July 9.

Despite the tariffs, India opted not to retaliate, instead signaling its intent to remain a reliable trading partner. New Delhi has since reduced tariffs on select US goods such as bourbon whiskey and motorcycles, and has de-linked tariff revisions from political pressures.

In the backdrop of these developments, a high-level Indian delegation led by Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is set to visit the US from May 17 to 20 to further the negotiations. The potential trade agreement is seen as a major opportunity to increase bilateral trade to over \$500 billion by 2030.

The proposed deal is expected to cover 24 categories of goods, ranging from agricultural products like soybeans and corn to military hardware. In exchange, India is seeking tariff concessions for its key export sectors such as textiles, leather goods, furniture, automotive components, and gems and jewellery.

# Turkish Firm Operating At Indian Airports Loses Security Clearance After Op Sindoor

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a significant move amid rising diplomatic tensions, the Indian government has revoked the security clearance of Turkish firm Celebi Ground Handling India Private Limited, which manages critical airport services at nine major Indian airports. The decision, announced on May 15 by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, was taken "in the interest of national security" following Turkey's open support for Pakistan during India's ongoing Operation Sindoor.

Celebi, which also manages cargo operations at Delhi International Airport under a separate entity—Celebi Delhi Cargo Terminal Management India—has now been officially removed from operations. The Delhi airport has terminated its association with the company, marking India's first direct economic action against a Turkish en-

terprise.

Junior Civil Aviation Minister Murlidhar Mohol confirmed the development, stating, "Celebi Airport Services India Pvt Ltd is a Turkey-based company providing ground handling at multiple Indian airports. Given Turkey's open support for Pakistan and considering national security concerns, the company has been banned."

Turkey's alignment with Pakistan, especially during the recent military escalation, has raised alarms in New Delhi. Intelligence reports linked Turkish-made drones such as the Bayraktar TB2 and Asisguard SONGAR to attacks on Indian positions on May 8. Furthermore, Turkey's military collaboration with Pakistan and the presence of a Turkish warship and air force aircraft in Karachi added to the urgency of the decision.



In response, Celebi Aviation emphasized its operational independence from Turkey, stating it is a global

company with over 65 years in aviation and that its Indian operations are run by Indian professionals. The company underscored its commitment to corporate neutrality and adherence to international standards.

Public sentiment in India has also turned sharply against Turkey. A sweeping "Boycott Turkey" movement is trending across social media, prompting Indian tourists to cancel travel plans and academic institutions like Jawaharlal Nehru University to cut ties with Turkish counterparts. The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) is also considering a complete trade boycott of Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Celebi's expulsion reflects a broader strategic shift in India's foreign policy, as it strengthens ties with nations traditionally opposed to Turkey, including Greece, Armenia, and the UAE.



# "Young, Attractive Guy": Trump's Big Praise For Terrorist-Turned-President In Historic Meeting with Syrian Leader

TPN Correspondent | Riyadh

In a groundbreaking shift in U.S. foreign policy, President Donald Trump met Syria's interim president, Ahmad al-Sharaa, in Riyadh on Wednesday, marking the first meeting between a U.S. president and a Syrian leader in 25 years. Al-Sharaa, once a leader of the rebel group Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which was affiliated with al-Qaeda and labeled a terrorist organization by the U.S., is now Syria's interim president after toppling Bashar al-Assad in December 2024.

The meeting, arranged at the request of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, came one day after Trump lifted extensive sanctions on Syria, a move that has caused a stir internationally. The sanctions, which have been in place since 1979, were imposed due to Syria's support for Palestinian militant groups. However, Trump's decision to ease sanctions has provided a potential lifeline to the war-torn country, still grappling with the aftermath of years of conflict.

During the meeting, Trump praised al-Sharaa, who was once known as Abu Mohammad al-Julani, calling him a "young, attractive guy" with a "very strong past"



and a "fighter." Trump expressed optimism about al-Sharaa's ability to lead Syria, stating, "He's got a real shot at holding it together." The U.S. president also mentioned his conversations with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who is reportedly friendly with al-Sharaa and believes in his potential to stabilize Syria.

Despite his praise, Trump made no commitment to removing Syria from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, which

still hinders foreign investment in the country. Trump also urged al-Sharaa to normalize relations with Israel, but it remains unclear how this diplomatic push will unfold.

The meeting raised eyebrows globally due to al-Sharaa's past as a jihadist and his long history of fighting U.S. forces. Al-Sharaa, now donning a suit and tie, has left behind his militant past, signaling a new era for Syria under his leadership.

## Pakistani Court Allows Lie Detector and Facial Analysis Tests for Imran Khan in May 9 Violence Cases

TPN Correspondent | Lahore

A Pakistani anti-terrorism court has granted permission to law enforcement agencies to conduct polygraph (lie detector) and photogrammetric (facial and voice recognition) tests on former Prime Minister Imran Khan in connection with multiple terrorism cases linked to the May 9, 2023 violence.

On Wednesday, Judge Manzer Ali Gill of the Anti-Terrorism Court-I (ATC-I) approved the prosecution's request to conduct the tests within 12 days at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, where Khan has been held since August 2023. These tests pertain to 12 terrorism-related cases, including the high-profile attack on the Lahore Corps Commander House, commonly known as Jinnah House.

The violent protests erupted on May 9, 2023, following Imran Khan's dramatic arrest by paramilitary Rangers from the Islamabad High Court premises. The unrest saw supporters of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party allegedly van-



dalising several military and intelligence facilities, including the Mianwali airbase, the ISI office in Faisalabad, and even the Army's General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

Khan's lawyer, Barrister Salman Safdar, strongly opposed the prosecution's petition, questioning the timing and legality of the tests. He highlighted that the request came 727 days after the incidents, and pointed out that Khan has already

secured bail in 21 terrorism cases. According to Safdar, Khan has lawfully recorded statements in all the relevant cases, which were accepted by the Lahore High Court.

Special Prosecutor Rana Aazar countered the arguments, stating that the Supreme Court permits such investigative tools to fulfill legal requirements. He insisted that conducting a voice match test is essential for the integrity of the investigation. However, Khan has refused to participate in the tests without his lawyer present, raising further legal complexities.

Despite the defense's objections, the judge sided with the prosecution, authorizing the polygraph and photogrammetric testing to be conducted within the next 12 days.

The development marks a significant turn in the ongoing legal challenges faced by the PTI founder, who remains incarcerated amid a slew of charges stemming from political unrest and other alleged offenses.

## 5.1 Magnitude Earthquake Strikes Near Ankara, Turkey; No Immediate Reports of Damage

TPN Correspondent | Turkey

Strong tremors were felt in Turkey's capital, Ankara, on Thursday afternoon following a 5.1 magnitude earthquake that struck northeast of the town of Kulu, according to the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre (EMSC). The quake was recorded at approximately 3:46 p.m. local time.

The epicenter was located around 14 kilometers northeast of Kulu in Turkey's Konya province. Although the tremor sent shockwaves through Ankara and its surrounding areas, no immediate reports of damage or injuries have been reported. State-backed Iranian news outlet Mehr News also confirmed the tremors were significant but not destructive.

The seismic event has rekindled memories of the catastrophic earthquakes that devastated Turkey and Syria in February 2023. During that tragedy, two powerful quakes measuring 7.8 and 7.5 on the Richter scale struck in quick succession, causing widespread destruction and claiming more than 59,000 lives in Turkey and around 8,000 in Syria. Those quakes left tens of thousands homeless and triggered a massive international aid response.

While Thursday's quake was much small-



er in comparison, its proximity to major population centers like Ankara heightened public concern. Turkish authorities have assured citizens that emergency services are monitoring the situation closely and will provide updates should any aftershocks or structural damage be reported.

This latest quake comes just a day after a separate 6.1 magnitude earthquake struck near Fry, Greece, in the early hours of Wednesday. According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS), that earthquake occurred at a depth of 78 kilometers and was felt across a wide region, including in Cairo, Egypt; Israel; Lebanon; Turkey; and

Jordan.

Turkey sits on several active fault lines, making it one of the most earthquake-prone countries in the world. The North Anatolian Fault, in particular, has been responsible for several devastating earthquakes in Turkish history.

Geological experts continue to stress the importance of earthquake preparedness, especially in densely populated urban areas. Residents in Ankara and nearby regions have been urged to stay alert, although officials do not currently anticipate major aftershocks from this particular seismic event.



## "Don't Want You Building In India": Donald Trump To Apple CEO Tim Cook

In a recent business event in Doha, US President Donald Trump made it clear to Apple CEO Tim Cook that he does not want the tech giant expanding its manufacturing operations in India. Trump voiced concerns over the high tariffs in India, suggesting that the country can "take care of themselves" when it comes to production.

"I have a little problem with Tim Cook," Trump said. "I told him, 'You are coming up with \$500 billion, but now I hear you are building all over India. I don't want you building in India.'" He explained that India's high tariff structure makes it difficult to sell products in the country. "India is one of the highest tariff nations in the world," Trump added, emphasizing the challenges Apple could face.

Trump further claimed that India had made a deal with the United States, offering to charge no tariffs on US goods, but such an offer has not been confirmed by New Delhi. "They offered us a deal where basically they have agreed to charge us literally no tariffs," Trump said. "We put up with all the plants you built in China for years. We're not interested in you building in India. India can take care of themselves."

At the same time, Trump highlighted that Apple is set to expand its production in the United States, a move in line with his broader "America First" trade policies. This nudge to Tim Cook comes at a pivotal moment as Apple plans to shift more of its manufacturing operations away from China, partly due to tariffs imposed during Trump's administration.

Currently, Apple operates three plants in India — two in Tamil Nadu and one in Karnataka, with Foxconn and Tata Group managing them. The company is also planning to open two additional plants in the country. According to reports, Tim Cook has expressed hopes that a significant portion of iPhones sold in the U.S. will eventually be manufactured in India, marking a shift in the company's production strategy.

## Putin Skips Ukraine Talks, Sends Experienced Russian Delegation

TPN Correspondent | Russia

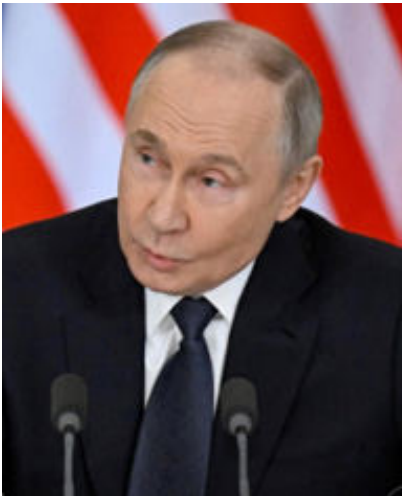
Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on May 14, 2025, that he would not personally attend upcoming direct peace talks with Ukraine, but instead, a seasoned team of negotiators would represent Russia. This decision follows Putin's earlier proposal to hold the talks, which had led to speculation about his potential participation.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had stated that he would attend the talks if Putin himself were present. However, with Putin opting out, the Russian delegation will be led by prominent officials who played key roles in previous negotiations. The team includes Vladimir Medinsky, a presidential adviser who was involved in the early stages of the 2022 talks, and Alexander Fomin, Russia's Deputy Defence Minister.

Another notable member of the delegation is Igor Kostyukov, the director of Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate, known as the GRU. Kostyukov, who is also the Chief of the Main Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces, is considered a seasoned negotiator with significant experience in military and intelligence matters. Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin is also part of the team.

The talks, which are aimed at resolving the ongoing war, are crucial for both sides, with hopes that a diplomatic solution can be reached. The last set of negotiations between Russia and Ukraine took place in early 2022, with rounds held in Belarus and Türkiye. However, those talks collapsed, and the war has continued ever since.

While the absence of Putin from these talks could signal that Russia is not immediately seeking peace, it is also a reminder of the high-stakes nature of the conflict. As Russia and Ukraine continue to wage war, the composition of the Russian delegation shows that Moscow is still engaged in diplomatic efforts, even if Putin himself is not at the table.





# Markets Rally Sharply; Nifty Crosses 25,000, Sensex Soars 1,200 Points on Broad-Based Buying

Domestic stock markets were buoyed on Thursday. Benchmark indices ended with huge gains. The indices, which started flat in the morning due to mixed signals from global markets, unexpectedly rebounded after noon. This was due to investors rushing to buy. With this, the Nifty crossed the 25000 level. Auto, realty, metal, media and finance shares were the drivers for this. Overall, the Nifty gained 395 points and the Sensex gained 1200 points. Gold prices fell as uncertainty eased.



The BSE Sensex, which closed at 81,330 in the previous session, opened at 81,354 on Thursday. It touched an intraday low of 80,762. It reached an intraday high of 82,718. It finally closed at 82,530 with a gain of 1200 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 24,694, touched a low of 24,494 and a high of 25,116. It closed at 25,062, up 395 points. The Nifty Bank rose 554 points to settle at 55,355.

49 companies in the Nifty50 gained and one lost. Hero Moto, JSW Steel, Tata Motors, Trent, Shriram Finance were the top gainers. IndusInd Bank lost slightly. Mid and smallcap indices rose sharply today. Auto, realty, metal; media, finance, oil, IT, private bank indices were strong. Consumption, healthcare, pharma, telecom, FMCG, and PSU banks did not fare well.

Market breadth favors buyers on NSE today. Out of 2942 stocks traded, 1980 gained and 890 lost. 59 stocks touched their 52-week highs and 11 stocks touched their 52-week lows. 175 stocks reached the upper circuit and 27 stocks reached the lower circuit.

The rupee weakened slightly against the dollar and settled at 85.54. The number of shareholders on NSE crossed one lakh. Morgan Staley has given an equal weight rating to Muthoot Finance with a target price of Rs. 2400. Nomura has given a buy rating to Hindustan Aeronautics with a target price of Rs. 4700. HSBC has maintained a buy rating on Berger Paints with a target price of Rs. 620. Page Industries' Q4 profit rose 51.6% to Rs 164 crore from Rs 108 crore. Tube Investment's profit rose 30% to Rs 814 crore from Rs 248 crore. It is noteworthy that there was a one-time gain of Rs 569 crore. Welspun Enterprises' net profit rose 30% to Rs 100 crore from Rs 77 crore. Vinati Organics' profit rose 18.3% to Rs 123 crore from Rs 104 crore. 20 lakh shares changed hands in LT Finance. ITC Hotels' net profit rose 20.5% to Rs 215 crore from Rs 259 crore. South Indian Bank's



net profit rose 19% to Rs 342 crore from Rs 287 crore. Cochin Shipyard's net profit rose from Rs. 259 crore to Rs. 287 crore, a growth rate of 10%.

#### 1. HCL Technologies (HCLTECH)



HCL Technologies is a leading Indian IT services company, providing software, consulting, and digital transformation services globally, headquartered in Noida. Announced plans in 2021 to create 12,000 new jobs in the U.S. over five years, with over 2,000 graduates to be recruited in 36 months. Focus on organic expansion, with consistent cash flow conversion (FCF/PAT ex-acquisition) above 100% for three years, outperforming large-cap peers. Investments in AI, cloud, and cybersecurity to drive client demand in BFSI, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors. Scaling up early career programs like "Rise at HCL" to build a skilled workforce in key markets like the U.S. HCLTech is well-positioned for growth in digital services, but U.S. tariff uncertainties and weak discretionary IT spending may pose challenges, as noted in the broader IT sector outlook.

#### 2. Trent Limited (TRENT)

Trent, a Tata Group company, operates retail chains like Westside, Zudio, and Star Bazaar, focusing on fashion, lifestyle, and hypermar-

ket retailing. Strong revenue growth driven by Zudio's expansion and festive season demand, though specific financials are not detailed in the provided data. Trent has been a top performer, gaining significantly in 2024, with analysts noting its consistent score improvement and upside potential. Recognized for its robust growth in India's retail sector, particularly in tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Aggressive rollout of Zudio stores, targeting 300+ new stores annually, focusing on affordable fashion in smaller cities. Trent's focus on affordable retail and rapid expansion positions it for sustained growth, but competition from e-commerce giants and rising operational costs are risks.



#### 3. Tata Motors (TATAMOTORS)

Tata Motors, part of the Tata Group, is a leading Indian automotive manufacturer, producing cars, trucks, and buses, with subsidiaries like Jaguar Land Rover. Results awaited, but the company reported a market cap of ₹2,64,615 crore, down 26.2% in the past year. Revenue was ₹4,39,695 crore,



with a profit of ₹28,149 crore. Shares faced pressure, with promoter holding decreasing by 3.83% over three years to 42.6%. Launched a co-branded Diesel Exhaust Fluid (DEF) with HPCL in March 2025 to enhance commercial vehicle performance, available at 23,000 fuel stations. Scaling up EV production, with new models planned under the Tata.ev brand to capture India's growing EV market. Tata Motors is poised for growth in EVs and premium vehicles, but declining stock performance and global economic challenges, including U.S. tariffs, pose risks.

#### 4. DLF Limited (DLF)



DLF is India's largest real estate developer, focusing on residential, commercial, and retail properties, primarily in the NCR and other metro cities. Noted for positive momentum in 2021, with potential for upside in 2024 due to real estate demand. Benefits from India's urban housing boom and commercial leasing recovery post-COVID. Launching premium residential projects in Gurugram and Mumbai, targeting high-net-worth individuals. Expanding office and retail portfolios, with new leasing agreements in DLF Cyber City. Continued focus on lowering debt through asset monetization and strong cash flows. DLF is well-placed to capitalize on India's real estate recovery, but interest rate hikes and regulatory changes could impact affordability and demand.

#### 5. Grasim Industries (GRASIM)

Grasim, part of the Aditya Birla Group, is a diversified conglomerate with businesses in cement (UltraTech), textiles, chemicals, and financial services. Steady performance in cement and chemicals, with UltraTech driving growth, though specific financials are not provided in the data. Listed among top companies with consistent score improvement, indicating upside potential. Benefits from strong cement demand and diversification into paints and financial services. Grasim's diversified portfolio and cement leadership ensure growth, but competition in paints and raw material cost pressures are challenges.



## Passenger Vehicle Sales Rise by 4% in April; Two-Wheelers See 17% Dip, Reports SIAM

India's passenger vehicle segment saw significant growth in April 2025, with a 4% increase in dispatches compared to the same month last year. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) reported that 348,847 units were dispatched in April, up from 335,629 units in April 2024. This increase marks the highest-ever sales recorded for passenger vehicles in April, with a growth of 3.9% compared to last year. Rajesh Menon, the Director General of SIAM, attributed the positive trend to strong demand and favorable market conditions.



On the other hand, the two-wheeler market witnessed a significant decline. Dispatches dropped by 17% year-on-year, amounting to 1,458,784 units in April, down from 1,751,393 units in the same period last year. Among two-wheelers, motorcycles were particularly affected, with a 23% decline in sales, totaling 871,666 units. Scooters also saw a reduction of 6%, with sales standing at 548,370 units, down from 581,277 units in April 2024. Moped sales dipped 8%, with 38,748 units dispatched, compared to 41,924 units in April 2024.

The decline in two-wheeler sales has been attributed to a high base effect from the previous year, which saw a stronger-than-usu-

al performance. However, experts predict that the market for two-wheelers is expected to pick up in the coming months as demand recovers.

In the three-wheeler segment, there was a slight year-on-year decline, with dispatches reaching 49,441 units in April 2025, showing a marginal drop.

SIAM also highlighted the smooth transition of the automotive industry into the second stage of On-Board Diagnostics (OBD 2) regulation for two- and three-wheelers, which came into effect from April 2025. Additionally, the rollout of E-20 compliant gasoline vehicles started this month, in line with the country's commitment to sustainability.

The trends indicate a robust future for passenger vehicles while challenges remain for the two-wheeler segment.

## TCS Ranked 45th in Kantar's Most Valuable Global Brands 2025 with \$57.3 Billion Valuation

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's leading IT giant, has been valued at \$57.3 billion, marking a significant 28% year-on-year growth, according to Kantar's BrandZ Most Valuable Global Brands 2025 report. This has propelled TCS to the 45th spot globally in a ranking of 100 leading brands across various industries.



TCS's rise reflects its continued investment in brand-building efforts, with a strong global presence and strategic sponsorship programs. The company's brand equity has been further bolstered by high-impact partnerships in global sports, including marathons, customer-centric innovations, and excellence in marketing. Martin Guerrieria, Head of Kantar BrandZ, noted TCS's ability to innovate at scale, especially with the integration of AI into its service offerings.

The report highlights Apple, Google, and Microsoft as the top three brands globally, valued at \$1,299.65 billion, \$944.137 billion, and \$944.13 billion, respectively. Other Indian brands making it to the list include HDFC Bank (56th,

\$44.95 billion), Bharti Airtel (66th, \$37.09 billion), and Infosys (73rd, \$33.09 billion).

In a separate brand audit by Momentum-ITSMA, TCS's global brand awareness among business executives was recorded at an impressive 95%, a sharp increase from 29% in 2010. This improvement underscores the company's growing influence and recognition worldwide.

TCS's continued focus on humanizing technology and creating impactful experiences has helped establish a strong connection with consumers. In ad-

dition to its brand presence, TCS sponsors 14 major global running events, including the TCS New York City Marathon and TCS London Marathon, which together engage over 600,000 runners annually. These events not only contribute significantly to local economies but also raise millions for charitable causes.

As TCS continues to expand its global footprint, its growing brand value and influence reflect the company's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and building lasting relationships with its customers.



## Algeria’s Bold Move: Transforming the Sahara Desert into a Global Tourist Destination

Algeria, Africa’s largest country, is undergoing a transformative shift in its tourism policy as it looks to position itself as a major global destination by 2030. Traditionally conservative and self-reliant in its approach, Algeria had long kept international tourism at arm’s length.

But that has now changed dramatically.

In a strategic move to open up its vast desert landscape to the world, the Algerian government introduced a visa-on-arrival policy in January 2023 for all international visitors heading to the Sahara region. This move, excluding only nationals from Malaysia, Seychelles, and neighboring Maghreb countries, has drastically simplified the entry process. Now, tourists can obtain a 30-day visa upon arrival by paying a fee ranging between \$38 and \$376, depending on their stay duration.

This liberalized visa policy has triggered a tourism boom. The country welcomed 3.3 million tourists in 2023—a 45% increase from the previous year. Notably, 2.2 million of these were international visitors, according to the Algerian Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts.

A key attraction driving this surge is the Tassili n’Ajjer National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located deep in the Sahara. Known for its surreal, tree-like sandstone formations and ancient rock art, the park houses over 15,000 prehistoric engravings and paintings, some dating



back to 10,000 BCE. These artworks vividly depict early human life and the now-extinct fauna of the region, offering a unique glimpse into the past.

To further enrich the tourist experience, Algeria is promoting culturally immersive desert expeditions led by members of the indigenous Tuareg community, known for their deep knowledge of the desert and unique heritage.

To accommodate the rising interest, Algeria is also increasing the number of direct flights from European capitals and strengthening border security to ensure traveler safety.

Looking ahead, the Algerian government’s Tourism Development Master Plan 2030 aims to attract 12 million international visitors. The plan includes scaling up investments in hospitality infrastructure, improving service quality, and expanding accommodation facilities.

With a mix of historical wonders, cultural depth, and striking landscapes, Algeria is poised to become one of North Africa’s most compelling destinations.

## Netflix’s Ad-Supported Tier Hits 94 Million Subscribers Amid Economic Uncertainty

Netflix’s ad-supported subscription model is gaining significant traction, with the streaming giant reporting a strong surge in subscribers. As of May 2025, the company revealed that its ad-supported service now has 94 million subscribers, a significant increase from the 70 million reported in November 2024. This growth comes at a time of global economic uncertainty, with Netflix’s lower-priced plan seeing robust demand from consumers seeking affordable entertainment options.

The streaming platform’s decision to offer an ad-supported tier has proven successful, especially during economic challenges that have led many users to be more selective in their spending. In fact, Netflix reported that the ad-supported tier accounted for 55% of all new sign-ups in markets where the option is available. This surge is particularly noteworthy as Netflix works to

balance premium offerings with budget-friendly alternatives.

With over 300 million global subscribers, Netflix is also experiencing steady engagement across all of its streaming plans. The company has reassured investors that despite the shifting US trade policies, including the threat of tariffs on foreign-made films, consumer spending on streaming services remains resilient. In an attempt to further appeal to global audiences, Netflix has also expanded its language options, offering more dubbing and subtitle choices to

cater to viewers across different regions.

Netflix’s recent international successes, such as the South Korean series *Squid Game* and the Spanish hit *Money Heist*, have contributed to its global appeal. The platform continues to refine its strategy to ensure it remains a dominant player in the competitive

streaming market. These efforts, including the increased focus on its ad-supported tier, highlight Netflix’s commitment to diversifying its offerings to attract both cost-conscious subscribers and those willing to pay for a premium ad-free experience.

As it continues to expand its user base worldwide, Netflix remains optimistic about its ability to navigate the challenges posed by global trade tensions and economic shifts, ensuring its place as a leader in the streaming industry.



## US Man Disappointed After Receiving Trump-Branded Watch With a Major Typo

A man from Rhode Island, USA, is making headlines after spending \$640 (approximately Rs 55,000) on a Donald Trump-branded watch, only to receive a defective timepiece with a glaring typo. Tim Petit purchased the limited edition pink “Inauguration First Lady” model from the website GetTrumpWatches as a special gift for his wife, Melanie. The watch, which was marketed as a unique piece with just 250 units available, was advertised to attract “prosperity and love while enhancing intuition and creativity.”



However, upon receiving the watch, the Petits were disappointed to discover that the Trump logo was missing the vital “T,” leaving the brand name reading “RUMP” in bold letters across the watch’s face. Tim Petit expressed his frustration, noting that he had hoped the gift would have been of the same high standard as the former President himself. He was disheartened by the lack of quality control, especially after spending such a significant amount on what was meant to be a meaningful present for his wife.

Melanie Petit shared her initial shock when she noticed the missing “T” in the logo. “How could they process this and go through something without checking their work?” she said, admitting that the mistake even caused her to tear up. Despite liking the overall style of the watch, she couldn’t overlook

the glaring error.

The website, GetTrumpWatches.com, promotes its timepieces as the “official watches of President Trump,” but in fine print, it clarifies that the brand is licensed and not associated with any political campaign or the Trump organization. After some initial difficulty in reaching the company, the Petits finally received an apology, along with an \$800 coupon as compensation for the mistake.

The Petits believe that the company needs to review its processes, particularly in its licensing department, to avoid such errors in the future. Although the incident was frustrating, the couple is hopeful that it will prompt the company to improve its quality control.

## New Scam Targeting Swiggy and Zomato Users: Fake Refunds and QR Code Payments

A new scam targeting food delivery platform users has recently surfaced, alarming customers of Swiggy and Zomato. At first glance, the scam may appear as a glitch, but it has serious implications for businesses and consumers alike. It has been gaining attention on social media, with a viral video highlighting the fraudulent scheme.

In the video, a content creator shares her shocking experience with the scam. After ordering pizza from Swiggy, she received a call stating that the delivery driver had met with an accident, and the restaurant would fulfill the order directly. When she contacted the restaurant to confirm, they denied offering direct deliveries, raising suspicions. Soon after, Swiggy informed her that her order couldn’t be fulfilled and initiated a full refund, which she received promptly.

However, things took a bizarre

turn when a delivery agent later showed up at her doorstep claiming to have the food. The delivery agent then asked her to pay via a QR code, as she had already received the refund. Sensing something was wrong, the consumer immediately contacted the restaurant, only to learn they did not offer direct deliveries. The restaurant manager advised her not to pay the delivery agent and simply take the pizza.

The scam, as described by the content creator, involves the fraudster keeping the entire refund amount, exploiting the lack of platform accountability. This

issue goes beyond just free meals; it poses risks like fraudulent payouts, false delivery statistics, and customer safety concerns. It also affects small restaurants that may suffer from inventory loss and trust issues with delivery platforms.

**To avoid falling victim to this scam, experts suggest the following safety measures:**

- Do not trust the delivery agent if the order was cancelled and then delivered.
- Immediately contact the restaurant to verify if they offer direct deliveries.
- Contact customer care of the platform and report the incident.
- Ensure you’re paying the right person and avoid using QR codes provided by delivery agents.
- Swiggy responded to the video, assuring the public that they would investigate the matter further.



## Dining With Penguins in Dubai? Viral Video Reveals Magical Experience at Ski Dubai



A unique culinary adventure has captured the hearts of netizens around the world, thanks to a now-viral Instagram reel showcasing the quirky and magical experience of dining with penguins in Dubai. Shared by user Zoe Liu (@zoroyalred), the short video gives viewers an enchanting glimpse into one of Ski Dubai’s most unusual offerings — a themed dining setup where guests enjoy a gourmet meal while penguins waddle around freely.

The video, simply captioned “What’s it like to have dinner with penguins?”, quickly went viral, sparking widespread fascination and delight. Set within the snowy interiors of Ski Dubai — located inside the Mall of the Emirates — the restaurant features icy decor, mimicking the inside of a glowing, snow-covered cave. From the frosted furniture to the cool blue lighting, the ambiance fully immerses diners in a winter wonderland.

Due to the low temperatures necessary for the comfort of the penguins, guests are provided with padded jackets, gloves, and insulated boots to stay warm throughout the experience. It’s not just a meal, but a carefully curated environ-

ment designed to make both diners and penguins feel at home.

The dining package includes a multi-course meal: beginning with a welcome drink and soup, followed by a hearty main course, dessert, and two additional beverages. However, the highlight is undoubtedly the penguins — gentle, curious, and completely at ease as they wander through the dining space. Between courses, they make their entrance, charming guests with their antics.

While the viral reel doesn’t show it, staff and trained professionals are present throughout the evening. They not only ensure the penguins’ well-being but also engage guests with educational snippets about the animals’ habits, biology, and conservation.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience blends luxury dining with an unforgettable interaction with nature, making it a must-try for both animal lovers and culinary adventurers. With the buzz growing online, “dining with penguins” at Ski Dubai has become a bucket-list experience for tourists and locals alike — proof that dinner with a few feathery friends is anything but ordinary.



## Jannik Sinner Meets Tennis Fan Pope Leo XIV, Gifts Him a Tennis Racket

World No. 1 tennis player Jannik Sinner recently had a memorable meeting with the newly elected Pope Leo XIV, who is a known tennis enthusiast. The Italian tennis star was invited to the Vatican along with his parents and a delegation from the Italian Tennis Federation. During the meeting, Sinner presented the pontiff with one of his tennis rackets.

Pope Leo XIV, previously known as Cardinal Robert Prevost, is quite fond of tennis and has openly admitted to being an amateur player. In a 2023 interview, he shared that he played tennis as a child and enjoys the sport. His love for tennis was evident when



he joked earlier in the week that he didn't want to meet the world's top tennis player, not "behind the net." When asked by a journalist whether he would consider participating in a charity match, the pope lightheartedly responded, "Just don't bring Sinner," making a playful pun about the tennis star's last name.

During their meeting, Pope Leo XIV humorously declined an offer to play a few rounds of tennis, stating, "Better not," which resulted in a burst of laughter from those in attendance.

Sinner, who is currently participating in the Italian Open, is making a

comeback after a three-month doping ban. The tennis star appeared slightly embarrassed when asked about the pope's comments, burying his head in his hands during a news conference. "Why do you have to put me in a difficult spot?" Sinner responded with a laugh, adding, "It's great to know that the pope likes tennis. It's a good thing for us tennis players to have a pope who enjoys the sport."

The encounter between Sinner and the pope has caught the attention of fans worldwide, highlighting not only the connection between sport and spirituality but also the shared enthusiasm for tennis.

## Lakshya Sen Exits Thailand Open, Malvika Bansod, Aakarshi Kashyap, and Unnati Advane

India's Lakshya Sen suffered a surprising loss in the first round of the Thailand Open Super 500 tournament on Wednesday, while Malvika Bansod, Aakarshi Kashyap, and Unnati Hooda made it through to the second round with hard-fought victories.

Sen, a 2021 World Championships bronze medallist, was defeated by Ireland's Nhat Nguyen in a tense three-game battle. After losing the first game 18-21, Sen fought back in the second to dominate 21-9. However, Nguyen sealed the match with a 21-17 win in the third, overcoming Sen's aggressive rallies. The match lasted for an hour and 20 minutes, marking a disappointing end for the Indian shuttler.

Meanwhile, in women's singles, Malvika Bansod (World No. 23) advanced to the second round with a 21-12, 13-21, 21-17 victory over Turkey's Neslihan Arin. She will now face seventh-seeded Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand. Aakarshi Kashyap also fought through a tough match, beating Japan's Kaoru Sugiyama 21-16, 20-22, 22-20 in a match that went down to the wire. Aakarshi will face fourth-seeded Supanida Katethong, another Thai shuttler, in the next round.

Unnati Hooda, the 17-year-old prodigy who has shown remarkable promise with wins at the 2022 Odisha Masters and 2023 Abu Dhabi Masters, won her first-round match 21-14, 18-21, 23-21 against Thailand's Thamomwan Nithiittikrai. She will next meet top seed



Pornpawee Chochuwong from Thailand.

In the men's singles, World No. 33 Priyanshu Rajawat was also knocked out, losing 13-21, 21-17, 16-21 to Alwi Farhan of Indonesia.

On a brighter note, India's top doubles pair, Tressa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand (World No. 10), had a strong start, winning 21-15, 21-13 against Malaysia's Ong XY and C Ting. They will next face Japan's Rui Hirokami and Sayaka Hobara.

Other Indian players, including Rakshitha Sree Santhosh Ramraj and Anupama Upadhyaya, lost their opening singles matches.

## 2025 World Test Championship Final to Feature Record Prize Money



The winners of the 2025 World Test Championship (WTC) will be awarded a record prize of \$3.6 million, more than double the \$1.6 million that was handed to Australia for winning the final against India in 2023. The significant increase in prize money underscores the International Cricket Council's (ICC) commitment to elevating the profile of Test cricket, reflecting its efforts to grow the competition.

The 2025 final will see Australia take on South Africa at the historic Lord's Cricket Ground, with the match set to begin on June 11. In addition to the champions' share of \$3.6 million, the losing finalists will receive \$2.1 million. This marks a sharp rise from the \$800,000 received by the runners-up in the

previous two editions of the WTC.

The prize money boost highlights the ICC's ongoing focus on Test cricket, aiming to build on the momentum created by the first three cycles of the nine-team competition. South Africa made a strong finish in the current cycle, clinching 69.44 percentage points with a 2-0 home series win over Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Defending champions Australia followed closely behind with 67.54 points, while India, despite leading the standings for much of the competition, finished with 50.00 points.

Australian captain Pat Cummins expressed pride in his team's achievement, stating, "We are enormously proud to have the opportunity to

defend the World Test Championship, especially at Lord's. It's a testament to all those involved across the past two years who have worked incredibly hard to reach the final."

South African skipper Temba Bavuma also acknowledged the significance of the event, saying, "Everyone understands the importance of Test cricket, and the World Test Championship lends context to this vital format of the game. Lord's is a fitting venue for this mega fixture, and all of us will be out there trying to give our best against Australia."

The 2025 final is shaping up to be a thrilling contest between two of the best teams in Test cricket.

## Carlos Alcaraz and Coco Gauff Reach Italian Open Semifinals with Straight-Set Wins

Carlos Alcaraz and Coco Gauff both advanced to the semifinals of the Italian Open on Wednesday, each securing impressive straight-set victories in their respective quarterfinal matches.

Alcaraz, who had a challenging start to the season due to injuries, faced a tough test from Jack Draper but ultimately triumphed 6-4, 6-4. Despite Draper's strong challenge, Alcaraz managed to save six of the eight break points he faced. The Spaniard, who had previously lost to Draper in the semifinals at Indian Wells, showed his resilience by coming from 2-4 down in the first set. In the second set, he fought through a crucial eighth game, saving two break points, before breaking Draper at love and sealing the match. Alcaraz's next opponent will either be defending champion Alexander Zverev or Italy's Lorenzo Musetti.

After the match, Alcaraz reflected on his performance, stating, "The most important thing I did today was not thinking about the shots at all. I just tried to be aggressive, play good shots, drop shots, and go to the net. That's what I like to do, and I think that made the difference today."



On the women's side, Coco Gauff continued her dominant form, advancing to the semifinals for the third time in Rome with a 6-4, 7-6(5) win over Russia's Mirra Andreeva. Gauff showed aggressive play throughout the match, and while Andreeva fought hard in the tiebreaker, Gauff closed out the match with a solid finish. This win marks Gauff's fourth victory over Andreeva, having beaten her at the French Open, U.S. Open, and in Madrid earlier this year. Gauff's next opponent will be the winner between Aryna Sabalenka and Zheng Qinwen.

As the Italian Open serves as a key preparation event for the upcoming French Open, both Alcaraz and Gauff are in strong form heading into the final stages of the tournament.

## India Announces Women's Squads for White-Ball Tour to England Starting June 28

India has announced its women's cricket squads for the upcoming white-ball tour of England, which will include five T20 Internationals (T20Is) and three One Day Internationals (ODIs). Harmanpreet Kaur will continue to lead both squads, with Smriti Mandhana named as vice-captain.



The series is set to begin on June 28 with the first T20I in Nottingham. The final T20I will take place in Birmingham on July 12. The ODI leg of the tour will kick off on July 16 in Southampton, with the final match scheduled for July 22 at Chester-le-Street.

Notably absent from both squads are Renuka Singh and Shreyanka Patil, who have been key players in past series but will sit out this tour. The selection panel has instead placed faith in several young talents, including Sree Charani, Shuchi Upadhyay, and Kranti Gaud, who will feature in both formats.

In their last international assignment, Team India clinched the ODI tri-series against Sri Lanka and South Africa. In the final played in

### Here are the full squads for the England tour:

**T20I Squad:**  
Harmanpreet Kaur (Captain), Smriti Mandhana (Vice-Captain), Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (Wicketkeeper), Yastika Bhatia (Wicketkeeper), Harleen Deol, Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Shuchi Upadhyay, and Kranti Gaud.

Colombo, India posted 342/7, powered by Smriti Mandhana's superb 116-run knock. The bowlers backed up the batting effort with Sneha Rana taking 4/38 and Amanjot Kaur adding 3/48 to bowl Sri Lanka out for 245 in 48.2 overs.

**ODI Squad:**  
Harmanpreet Kaur (Captain), Smriti Mandhana (Vice-Captain), Pratika Rawal, Harleen Deol, Jemimah Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh (Wicketkeeper), Yastika Bhatia (Wicketkeeper), Tejal Hasabnis, Deepti Sharma, Sneha Rana, Sree Charani, Shuchi Upadhyay, Amanjot Kaur, Arundhati Reddy, Kranti Gaud, Sayali Satghare.

The tour promises to be a key preparation ground for India's women ahead of future ICC events and offers several younger players a platform to prove their mettle on foreign soil.





## Sreeleela & Kireeti Set for Debut in Junior, Hitting Screens on July 18

Business tycoon and former Karnataka minister Gali Janardhan Reddy's son, Kireeti Reddy, is all set to make his acting debut with the upcoming film *Junior*. The film, touted as a youthful love and family entertainer, stars popular actress Sreeleela in the lead opposite Kireeti. It is directed by Radha Krishna and produced by Rajani Korrapati under the prestigious banner Vaaraahi Chalana Chitram.

The makers have officially locked July 18, 2025, as the release date for *Junior*. Promising a Pan-India appeal, the film will release in all major South Indian languages—Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam—along with Hindi, aiming to capture audiences across regional markets.

The announcement came with a vibrant and appealing poster that showcases the main cast. The visual hints at the film's wholesome nature, blending romance, emotions, and family drama, while also spotlighting the youthful energy of the leads. The poster also features Genelia Deshmukh and Kannada superstar Dr Ravichandran V, who play key roles in the narrative, further boosting the film's star power and cross-industry appeal.

The musical score for *Junior* is composed by acclaimed music director Devi Sri Prasad, ensuring a high-energy and melodious soundtrack. The cinematography is being handled by the celebrated KK Senthil Kumar, known for his stellar visual work in numerous blockbusters. With such a talented team onboard, *Junior* is expected to be a visual and musical treat.



As Kireeti makes his transition from a political legacy to a cinematic debut, all eyes are on how he performs in this big-budget launch vehicle. Backed by strong production values, a popular star cast, and a seasoned technical crew, *Junior* is positioned as a high-stakes launchpad for the debutant.

The team behind *Junior* has promised regular updates leading up to its release. With the combination of fresh faces, established stars, and an experienced crew, the film has generated considerable buzz ahead of its theatrical release on July 18.

## Jr NTR to Possibly Portray Dadasaheb Phalke in Grand Biopic Backed by Rajamouli?

Jr NTR, known for his intense performances and larger-than-life screen presence, may soon step into a completely new cinematic territory. According to recent reports from Mumbai media circles, the actor is being considered to play the iconic role of Dadasaheb Phalke—the father of Indian cinema—in a powerful and emotionally rich biopic.



Currently busy with major projects such as *War 2*, *Prashanth Neel's* untitled film, and *Devara 2*, Jr NTR has reportedly shown keen interest in this historical film. Sources close to the development suggest that the project is being spearheaded by SS Rajamouli, his son SS Karthikeya, and Varun Gupta of Max Studios. The script, said to be ready, left Jr NTR deeply moved and he is believed to have given an instant nod.

If finalized, this film will mark a striking shift in Jr NTR's filmography, moving away from his usual mass-action roles to take on a nuanced, biographical character. Playing Dadasaheb Phalke—a visionary who laid the foundation for Indian cinema—would demand depth, restraint, and emotional intensity. Many industry watchers view this as a bold move for a commercial star like Jr NTR, but also one that could redefine his career trajectory.

Dadasaheb Phalke, born Dhundiraj Govind Phal-

ke in 1870, directed India's first full-length feature film *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913, an effort that marked the birth of Indian cinema. He went on to direct 95 films in total, often under difficult personal and financial circumstances. Inspired by *The Life of Christ* in 1910, Phalke dedicated his life to filmmaking, even selling his belongings and traveling to London to purchase equipment. His wife, Saraswati Bai, was instrumental in supporting his dream, even selling her jewelry to fund their first film.

Despite his immense contributions, Phalke's later years were marked by hardship and poverty. He lived without a permanent home for several years and passed away in obscurity.

If Jr NTR does take on this role, the biopic could become one of the most heartfelt and meaningful performances of his career, offering audiences an unforgettable tribute to the pioneer of Indian cinema.

## Samantha to Make Her Relationship with Raj Nidimoru Official Soon? Say's Reports

Samantha Ruth Prabhu, one of South India's most talked-about stars, is once again in the spotlight — but this time for personal reasons. The actress, known for her candor and grace, is reportedly preparing to officially announce her relationship with filmmaker Raj Nidimoru of the *Raj & DK* duo.

The buzz began when Samantha shared a cozy photo with Raj on her Instagram, immediately sparking speculation. Raj has increasingly been seen on Samantha's social media and has been spotted visiting her residence in Hyderabad, leading fans to wonder if something more than friendship is brewing. The two have also been seen together in public on multiple occasions, further fueling dating rumors.



Now, according to a report by Great Andhra, sources close to the couple have revealed that Samantha and Raj are ready to go public with their relationship. No longer wanting to keep things under wraps, the couple is reportedly planning to make an official announcement soon, much to the excitement of fans who have been closely follow-

ing their journey. Adding to the speculation, another source has suggested that the two are already scouting for a new home together. If true, this move could mark the beginning of a significant new chapter in both their lives.

Samantha was previously married to actor Naga Chaitanya.

The two tied the knot in 2017 and announced their separation in 2021. Since then, Chaitanya has moved on and recently married actress Sobhita Dhulipala.

Raj Nidimoru, on the other hand, was married to Shhyamali De. The couple wed in 2015 and reportedly separated in 2022. Shhyamali has a strong film background herself, having worked with filmmakers like Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra and Vishal Bhardwaj. While neither Samantha nor Raj has officially confirmed their relationship, all signs point toward an imminent announcement. Fans are now eagerly awaiting confirmation, as the actress seems ready to embrace love again and open a new, more joyful chapter in her life.

## Ram Pothineni's RAPO 22 Titled Andhra King Taluka, Promises a Fan-Fueled Cinematic Ride

Energetic star Ram Pothineni is all set to captivate audiences with his 22nd film, officially titled *Andhra King Taluka*. Directed by Mahesh Babu P, who previously impressed with *Miss Shetty Mr. Polishetty*, the film was announced with an exciting title glimpse released on the occasion of Ram's birthday. The glimpse has quickly created a buzz, offering a compelling look into a story centered around the intense world of fan culture.



*Andhra King Taluka* presents a powerful narrative driven by the unwavering devotion of a die-hard fan. The title reveal video sets the tone for an emotionally charged story, capturing the electric atmosphere surrounding a superstar's film release. It vividly portrays the chaos and pressure faced by cinema exhibitors as they scramble to meet the sky-high demand for tickets—a reality well-known in the South Indian film industry.

The theme of fan frenzy, deeply ingrained in Indian cinema, forms the emotional core of the film. This unique storyline promises to resonate not only with Ram's fans but with moviegoers across the country who understand the powerful bond between a star and their admirers.

In a special addition to the cast, Kannada superstar Upendra steps into the role of

the iconic movie star whom Ram's character idolizes, adding weight and nostalgia to the film. Bhagyashree Borse joins as the female lead, and her pairing with Ram is already drawing attention.

Backed by the renowned production house Mythri Movie Makers, *Andhra King Taluka* also boasts a musical score by the talented composer duo Vivek Marvin, who are expected to elevate the film's emotional and dramatic arcs with their music.

With its rich premise, talented cast, and a director known for his flair in blending humor and heart, *Andhra King Taluka* is shaping up to be a major theatrical experience. While the official release date is yet to be announced, expectations are already high for what could be one of Ram Pothineni's most memorable performances.

## Don 3: Ranveer Singh and Vikrant Massey Set to Begin Filming This September

The highly anticipated third installment of *Don* is finally gearing up for production. After months of speculation and delays, *Don 3*, directed by Farhan Akhtar, is all set to go on floors in September 2025. The film stars Ranveer Singh in the lead role, stepping into the iconic shoes once worn by Shah Rukh Khan and Amitabh Bachchan in earlier versions. Vikrant Massey has been cast as the antagonist, setting the stage for an exciting face-off.

The transition from Shah Rukh Khan to Ranveer Singh created a stir among fans, but director Farhan Akhtar has emphasized that the change was essential and that Ranveer is the right choice to carry the franchise forward. While the initial shooting schedule faced setbacks due to Farhan's commitment to *120 Bahadur* and Ranveer's ongoing work in *Dhurandar*, both projects are now nearing completion, clearing the path for *Don 3*.



According to a report from News18 Showsha, both Ranveer and Vikrant will be a part of the first shooting schedule, which promises to kick off with high-octane, stylized action sequences. These include intense bike chases and combat scenes that will highlight the stark contrast between Ranveer's flamboyant *Don* and Vikrant's grounded, gritty antagonist. The duo previously shared screen space in *Dil Dhadakne Do* and *Lootera*, but *Don 3*

marks their first major on-screen rivalry.

The female lead of the film remains a mystery. Kiara Advani, who was originally cast, has opted out due to her pregnancy. Currently, the makers are reportedly considering Kriti Sanon and Sharvari Wagh, with a final decision expected soon.

Backed by Excel Entertainment, *Don 3* is set to be a slick, action-packed thriller that reinvents the legacy of the *Don* franchise for a new generation. With a fresh cast, powerful visuals, and a compelling narrative, this reboot is aiming to be more than just a continuation — it's a reimagination. Fans can expect further announcements and a teaser rollout in the coming months, as production ramps up toward the much-anticipated cinematic showdown between Ranveer Singh and Vikrant Massey.