



### Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD

H 33° C  
L 25° C

VIJAYAWADA

H 35° C  
L 26° C

TIRUPATHI

H 36° C  
L 26° C



# Turning Point in Kaleshwaram Probe

Ghosh Commission to question KCR before filing final report

- Govt extends commission's term till July 31
- Final report only after KCR's explanation
- Former CM KCR to appear on June 5
- Harish Rao and Etala Rajender also summoned

**TPN Correspondent | Telangana**  
A major development has unfolded in the ongoing investigation into the Kaleshwaram irrigation project, as the Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghosh Commission has decided to summon former Telangana Chief Minister and BRS leader K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) before submitting its final report. This move marks a significant turning point in the probe. Earlier, the commission intended to complete its inquiry and finalize the report based primarily on documentary evidence and records related to the

roles of KCR, former irrigation minister Harish Rao, and former finance minister Etala Rajender, without direct interrogation. The commission had signaled that it could submit its report any time after May 22. However, in adherence to the principles of natural justice, which emphasize that no individual should be condemned without a fair chance to be heard, the commission has revised its approach. It will now provide KCR an opportunity to present his explanations and defend himself before concluding the investigation. Accordingly, the commission issued formal notices to KCR, Harish Rao, and Etala Rajender, asking them to appear within 15 days. The dates for their hearings have been set: KCR on June 5, Harish Rao on June 6, and Etala Rajender on June 9. The state government has further extended the commission's tenure till July 31 to allow adequate time for these proceedings

## Harish Rao Meets KCR..

Former Minister Harish Rao met former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) at his farmhouse in Erravalli following notices from the Justice P.C. Ghosh Commission regarding the Kaleshwaram irrigation project inquiry. The commission, probing alleged irregularities in the project's barrage construction, has summoned KCR for June 5, Harish Rao for June 6, and BJP MP Etala Rajender for June 9. Harish Rao and Etala Rajender held key ministerial roles when the project was executed under KCR's leadership. This inquiry comes after incidents like the Medigadda Barrage pillar collapse and reported quality issues in other barrages. The commission continues to investigate project management, quality, and financial matters. The meeting is seen as a crucial step ahead of the upcoming commission hearings.



## High-Level Probe Ordered Into Old City Fire That Killed 17



- Govt sets up 6-official panel after tragic fire
- Committee to examine causes of fire near Charminar
- CM directs thorough probe and preventive action
- Fire Services Director General Nagi Reddy
- HYDRA Commissioner A.V. Ranganath
- TGSPDCL Chairman & MD Musharraf Ali Farooqui

**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**

In the wake of the devastating fire near Hyderabad's historic Charminar that claimed 17 lives, the Telangana government has ordered a high-level investigation to probe the incident comprehensively. A six-member committee comprising senior officials has been constituted to examine the causes, evaluate relief efforts, and recommend future preventive measures. The panel was announced by Hyderabad In-charge Minister and Transport Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on Tuesday. The committee will conduct a detailed inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the fire and assess how various government departments handled rescue and relief operations.

**The members of the committee include:**

- GHMC Commissioner R.V. Karnan
- Hyderabad Collector Anudeep Durisetty
- Hyderabad Police Commissioner C.V. Anand

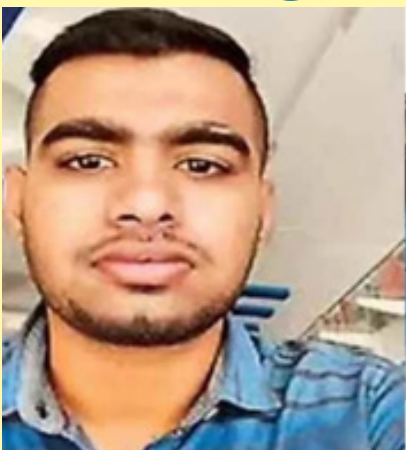
Chief Minister Revanth Reddy expressed profound sorrow over the tragedy and emphasized the need for strict preventive steps and public awareness to avoid such disasters in the future. After receiving the committee's report, he along with Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhathi Vikramarka will hold a high-level review meeting to decide further actions. The fire erupted near Gulzar House intersection in a building that housed shops on the ground floor and a family on the upper floors. Both Deputy CM Bhathi Vikramarka and Minister Ponnam Prabhakar visited the site immediately after the incident. However, BRS Working President KTR criticized the Chief Minister for not visiting the site or conducting an early review of the tragedy, calling for greater government responsiveness to the loss. The committee's findings and recommendations are eagerly awaited as Telangana seeks to strengthen safety protocols and emergency responses to prevent similar incidents in the future.

## More details Terror Plot Busted in Vizianagaram

- Sameer Al-Hind formed jihadi group to carry out blasts across four states
- Group named Ittehadul Musalman led by Sameer Al-Hind
- Planned blasts in Telangana, AP, Maharashtra & Karnataka
- NIA uncovers bomb-making trials in Vizianagaram forests

**TPN Correspondent | Vizianagaram**

More shocking details have surfaced in the Vizianagaram terror conspiracy case. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) identified Sameer Al-Hind from Boyaguda, Hyderabad, as the mastermind who formed a jihadi group named Ittehadul Musalman and plotted to carry out explosions in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. Sameer recruited six members into the group, including Siraj, a mechanical engineering graduate who had failed to clear SI and Group I exams. Despite being the



son of an ASI in Vizianagaram and brother of an SDF constable, Siraj turned to extremism after multiple career setbacks. While preparing for Group I in Hyderabad, Siraj came in contact with Sameer and later with Farhan Moinuddin of Warangal and Badar from Uttar Pradesh. They began discussing communal issues and injustices online, which slowly turned into radical plans. On November 22, Siraj and Sameer visited Mumbai and met individuals including Adnan Qureshi and Zaheer alias Aman.

Later, on January 26, Sameer traveled to Delhi to meet Shahbaz and Zeeshan. Investigators believe Shahbaz later left the country and met Salman in Manduli. A Saudi-based man named Abu Musab reportedly trained the group remotely through the Signal app. Musab instructed them on bomb-making and gave information on locations for attacks. Following his guidance, Siraj ordered explosives online. Meanwhile, Sameer used tiffin boxes,

## Hyderabad Metro Reduces Recently Increased Fares by 10%

- Fare revision will ease financial burden on daily metro passengers
- New reduced fares effective from May 24, 2025
- Minimum fare earlier raised from Rs. 10 to Rs. 12
- Maximum fare from Rs. 60 to Rs. 75

**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**

Good news for Hyderabad Metro commuters as the Metro Rail management has decided to reduce the recently increased fares by 10 percent. This revision comes following widespread objections from passengers against the fare hike implemented earlier this month. The fare increase had taken effect from May 17, 2025, with the minimum ticket price raised from Rs. 10 to Rs. 12, and the maximum ticket price increased from Rs. 60 to Rs. 75. Additionally, L&T had announced fare increments ranging from Rs. 2 to Rs. 16 depending on the travel distance. After reconsideration, the Hyderabad Met-



ro Rail management announced that these increased fares will be reduced by 10 percent, and the new fares will be applicable starting May 24, 2025. This move is expected to lessen the financial strain on thousands of daily commuters who rely on the metro for their transport needs. The management's decision has been welcomed by passengers and stakeholders, reflecting responsiveness to public concerns while ensuring sustainable metro operations.





# Minister to KCR: Why Fear the Kaleshwaram Inquiry?

- PC Ghosh Commission serves notices to ex-CM KCR
- Minister Sridhar Babu urges KCR to face the inquiry
- Says law is equal for all, questions fear if innocent

TPN Correspondent | Peddapalli

The Justice PC Ghosh Commission's notices to former Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) over alleged irregularities in the Kaleshwaram project have stirred political debate in the state. Telangana Minister D. Sridhar Babu reacted to the development and urged the BRS chief to appear before the inquiry panel without fear if he has done no wrong.



Speaking to reporters in Peddapalli on Tuesday, Minister Sridhar Babu stated, "The notices have just been issued. I believe he will attend the inquiry. If he has not done anything wrong, what is there to be afraid of?" He emphasized that the law is the same for everyone, regardless of position.

Recalling his own experience, Sridhar Babu pointed out that during KCR's tenure, the BRS government had filed illegal cases against him in connection with the Kaleshwaram project. "I fought those cases for eight years. Eventually, the court dismissed them, declaring I had done nothing wrong," he said. The Minister's remarks underline the government's stand that accountability must be upheld in major infrastructure projects like Kaleshwaram, which have come under increased scrutiny following concerns over engineering flaws and cost escalations.

## Incentive For Both Differently-Abled Spouses

- govt extends Rs. 1 lakh marriage incentive
- Earlier, only one differently-abled partner was eligible for the benefit

TPN Correspondent | Telangana

The Telangana government has announced a significant development for differently-abled citizens by extending marriage incentives to couples where both partners are differently-abled. Earlier, only couples where one partner was differently-abled were eligible for a Rs. 1 lakh incentive. However, a new Government Order (GO) issued by the Women and Child Welfare Department has now addressed this long-standing issue. For decades, the existing scheme provided financial assistance only if one part-



ner was differently-abled and the other was not, leaving couples where both partners were differently-abled without support. The differently-abled community had been raising concerns about this exclusion for a considerable time. Responding to these concerns, Minister for Women, Children and the Elderly, Sitakka, who also oversees the Welfare of the Disabled, took special initiative. She

brought this issue to the notice of the concerned authorities, leading to the issuance of the revised GO. The new order, signed by Anita Ramachandran, Secretary of the Department of Women and Child Welfare, now ensures that couples where both partners are differently-abled will be eligible for the Rs. 1 lakh marriage incentive. Officials confirmed that this change revises the earlier policy that restricted incentives to only one differently-abled partner in a marriage. This move has been widely welcomed as a progressive step toward inclusive welfare policies in Telangana, ensuring equal benefits for all differently-abled citizens, regardless of their marital partner's status.

## Khammam Police Deny Clash During Tiranga Rally



TPN Correspondent | Khammam

Khammam Police Commissioner Sunil Dutt on Monday dismissed reports of a clash between two communities during the BJP's Tiranga Rally held in the city to celebrate the success of Operation Sindoor. He urged the public not to believe videos circulating on social media claiming a BJP leader was attacked during the rally. "Some people are deliberately spreading rumours and speculations about untoward incidents during the Tiranga Rally in the city today. I urge you not to believe them," the commissioner said. The Tiranga Yatra, launched by the BJP on May 13, is a 10-day nationwide campaign to pay tribute to the bravery of the Indian armed forces and highlight the success of Operation Sindoor. Meanwhile, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and Bihar opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav expressed his

displeasure over the BJP's 'Tiranga Yatra', saying that the armed forces must not be dragged into politics. While he said he was proud of the armed forces for their "befitting reply" to Pakistan, Yadav criticized political parties for claiming credit for the military's success. "I believe in positive politics. The armed forces must never be dragged into politics. I have nothing to say to those who have no qualms about claiming credit for the success of the military operation," Yadav told journalists. He further called for a special session of Parliament where all members, including the Prime Minister, could express appreciation for the armed forces. When asked about differing views within the INDIA bloc on this, Yadav said, "All of us have different opinions. But the sentiment is the same - to honour our soldiers."

## Enforcement Director Shahnawaz Qasim Rewards Officers



TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Enforcement Director Shahnawaz Qasim emphasized the need for strict enforcement to curb crime in the Excise Department and praised the hard work of his team. Speaking at a recent event, he stated that effective enforcement will enhance the department's reputation. In recognition of their efforts, Director Qasim presented cash rewards to 30 talented personnel from the Enforcement and DTP teams who successfully seized ganja, drugs, and alprazolam across multiple Excise Superintendent (ES) areas including Kothagudam, Bhadrachalam, Shamshabad, Saroornagar, Sangaredy, and Malkajgiri. The program was also attended by Joint Commissioner Syed Yasin Qureshi and Assistant Commissioner Pranavi. In a separate event, Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners from various districts paid a courtesy call on Enforcement Director Shahnawaz Qasim to congratulate him on his new appointment. Officials from Medak, Warangal, Karimnagar, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, and Khammam, including Hari Kishan, Anjan Rao, David Ravikanth, Srinivasa Reddy, Somireddy, and Janardhan Reddy, participated along with other senior Excise officers.

## Red Alert in Bengaluru, Rains Hit Hyderabad Too

Work from home advised in Bengaluru as city reels under heavy rainfall

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Bengaluru is facing a severe weather crisis as heavy rains coupled with thunderstorms have brought normal life to a standstill. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an orange alert for Bengaluru city and a red alert for Karnataka state, with rainfall expected to continue from May 21 to 26.



In the past two weeks, 23 districts in Karnataka have already recorded 60% more rainfall than average. The Bengaluru Urban district alone received 278 mm of rain from May 1 to 20, which is 157% more than normal. On Monday night and early Tuesday, areas like Rajarajeshwari Nagar (150 mm), Kengeri (144 mm), Vidyapeeth (128 mm), and Nayandahalli (123 mm) experienced intense downpours. Traffic came to a halt in multiple parts of the city. Roads such as Hosur Road, Silk Board Junction, Kasturi Nagar, Hoodi, Banneghatta Main Road, and Gouraguntapalya saw massive jams. Waterlogging led to the temporary closure of Hosur Road's elevated expressway, which was reopened around 10:45 am. Commuters to Electronic City took over two hours to travel just 7 kilometers, with images and videos circulating widely on social media. In response, major companies along the Outer Ring Road IT corridor, including Infosys, TCS, and Wipro, have either advised or mandated work-from-home for their employees. The situation is grim in low-lying residential areas as well. Many apartments have been inundated. A 35-year-old woman tragically lost her life when the compound wall of an apartment collapsed in BTM Layout. In the same apartment complex, a 12-year-old boy was seriously injured due to an electric shock. While Hyderabad has also been witnessing intermittent rainfall, the city has not reached Bengaluru's crisis level. However, with weather systems active across South India, vigilance is advised in Telangana as well, particularly in urban flood-prone zones.

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## Turning Point in Kaleshwaram Probe

and a comprehensive investigation. A Government Order formalizing this extension was issued by Irrigation Department Principal Secretary Rahul Bojja. The inquiry commission was originally set up in March 2024 following the collapse of the Medigadda barrage and has since expanded its scope to probe the Annaram and Sundilla barrages as well. It has been examining senior officials from multiple departments including construction, design, quality control, irrigation, finance, and representatives of construction companies. This cautious and transparent approach comes after past legal challenges involving KCR. In a previous inquiry led by Justice L. Narasimha Reddy into pow-

er purchase and thermal plant projects, KCR had challenged the commission's conduct citing bias, leading to Supreme Court intervention and removal of Justice Reddy. Subsequently, Justice Madan Bheemrao Lokur, overseeing related inquiries, relied on KCR's written statements instead of summoning him in person. With these precedents in mind, Justice Ghosh is ensuring that the current investigation maintains fairness and provides KCR with a clear chance to respond before the commission issues its final findings. This development is widely seen as a critical step toward a transparent and just resolution of the controversies surrounding the Kaleshwaram project.

## More details Terror Plot Busted in Vizianagaram

wires, and other materials from Amazon to create bombs and conducted trials in the forests of Rampachodavaram in Vizianagaram. Investigators believe that both Siraj and Sameer were ready to die

for jihad. The NIA is preparing to take them into custody, and more critical information is expected to surface during further questioning.

## Govt Releases Rs.16.07 Crore Every Monday For Indiramma Houses

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

The Telangana government continues its commitment to housing for the underprivileged by releasing funds regularly for the construction of Indiramma houses, despite ongoing financial challenges, said Revenue, Housing, and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. On Monday, the government released Rs.16.07 crore for 1,383 houses that have completed basements and 224 houses that have completed wall construction. This is part of the ongoing disbursement process to support beneficiaries at various stages of house construction. So far, a total of Rs.53.64 crore has been released to 5,364 beneficiaries who have progressed in their construction work under the Indiramma scheme. The Minister monitored the payment status during a recent Zoom meeting with department officials to ensure smooth fund flow. The Indiramma House Scheme's pilot phase has sanctioned 47,335 houses across Telangana. Construction work has begun on 20,104 of these houses. Out of these, 5,140 houses have completed basements, 300 houses have walls constructed, and 10 houses have slabs completed. Minister Ponguleti emphasized that all payments are made directly to the beneficiaries without any involvement of middlemen, ensuring transparency and accountability. The payment schedule is structured in four in-



stallments: Rs.1 lakh after basement completion, Rs.1.25 lakh after wall construction, Rs.1.75 lakh after slab completion, and Rs.1 lakh after the house is fully completed. The Minister also urged officials to expedite the construction work and complete as many houses as possible before the onset of the rainy season to avoid delays and damage. This proactive approach highlights the government's determination to provide affordable housing and improve living conditions for the economically weaker sections in Telangana.



# Congress Holds Key Organizational Meeting in Illandu

**TPN Correspondent | Bhadradri Kothagudem**  
A significant meeting focused on the Congress Party's organizational restructuring was held on Tuesday, 20 May 2025, at the Aita Function Hall in Illandu Town of the Bhadradri Kothagudem District. The event was presided over by District Congress Party President and Telangana State Forest Development Corporation Chairman Sri Podem Veeraiah. Illandu MLA Sri Koram Kanakaiah participated as the chief guest, while TPCC Vice President Dr. Shravan Kumar Reddy and TPCC General Secretary Sri Pramod Kumar attended as special invitees and district observers. As part of the party's revitalization efforts in the region, applications were officially received from aspirants interested in serving as Mandal President, Town President, and B-Block Pres-



ident of the Congress Party in Illandu Mandal, Illandu Town, and Tekulapalli Mandal. All candidates submitted their applications in accordance with party guidelines. Respecting the views and inputs of grassroots workers, the applications were handed over to the designated observers. The meeting witnessed the enthusiastic participation of leaders and cadres from across the district. Speaking on the occasion, the senior Congress leaders emphasized that programs like these will help in strengthening the party structure, fostering collective leadership, and laying the foundation for a robust organization ahead of future political challenges. The event concluded successfully, reflecting a sense of unity and purpose among the party ranks.

# CM Failed to Include Ambedkar statue in the Miss World tour schedule

**TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad**  
Former MP and Telangana State Planning Board Vice Chairman Boinapally Vinod Kumar raised strong objections during a press meet at Telangana Bhavan regarding the itinerary of the Miss World pageant contestants who are currently touring Telangana. Vinod Kumar noted that the international contestants were taken to several historical and iconic sites including Nagarjuna Sagar, Charminar, Chowmahalla Palace, Thousand Pillar Temple, Ramappa Temple, Yadadri temple, Ramoji Film City, the Command Control Center, and the Telangana Secretariat. However, he questioned the intentional exclusion of the 125-foot Dr. B.R. Ambedkar statue, which Telangana proudly built as the world's tallest statue of Ambedkar.



He expressed disappointment that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy failed to include the Ambedkar statue in the Miss World tour schedule. "Ambedkar's life, contributions, and values should have been explained to the contestants. It would have been an honour to showcase his legacy to a global audience," Vinod Kumar stated. He urged the government to correct this mistake immediately and ensure that before the Miss World winners and delegates are taken to meet the Governor on June 2, they are shown the Amara-jyoti flame at the Ambedkar statue and educated about his historical significance. On a different note, responding to media queries regarding the Kaleshwaram Project Commission notices, Vinod Kumar said: "Yes, we have learnt that notices have been issued. However, we will wait to see the contents of the notices and respond accordingly." The remarks come at a politically sensitive time, with increasing scrutiny on how Telangana's cultural and political icons are represented in major international events.

# BRS Silver Jubilee Celebration Set in Dallas

**BRS to celebrate 25 years on June 1, 2025, at DR Pepper Arena**  
**KTR confirmed as chief guest for the event**



**TPN Correspondent | Telangana**  
The BRS is gearing up to celebrate its silver jubilee on June 1, 2025, at the DR Pepper Arena in Dallas, USA. The event aims to commemorate 25 successful years of the party and highlight the spirit of the Telangana movement to a global audience. BRS Global NRI Coordinator Mahesh Bigala, along with USA Advisory Board

Chairman Tanniru Mahesh, visited the Comerica Center where the celebrations will take place and met with local BRS leaders and supporters to finalize arrangements. Mahesh Bigala confirmed that BRS Working President Kalvakuntla Taraka Rama Rao (KTR) will be the chief guest. The celebrations will feature cultural programs and performances by artists,

organized under the Telangana Cultural Arts Council. He said, "This is not just a celebration, but a platform to convey the spirit of the Telangana movement worldwide. Associations from across the USA have expressed their support, and many Telangana people and BRS supporters will attend." Tanniru Mahesh added, "BRS supporters and affiliated associations from various states in America are coordinating to make this a milestone event in BRS history in the USA." The event is being organized on the lines of the earlier successful BRS Silver Jubilee Conference held in Elkathurthi. Local BRS USA leaders including Srinivas Surabhi, Harish Reddy, and Srinivas Surakanti are actively involved in supervision and arrangements. This celebration is expected to be a significant occasion to showcase Telangana's culture and the achievements of the BRS party abroad.

# We Will Garland KCR If Proven Innocent..



**TPN Correspondent | Telangana**  
Congress MLC Addanki Dayakar launched a fierce verbal attack on both the BJP and the BRS over the ongoing Kaleshwaram corruption probe. Speaking to the media, Dayakar said, "BJP doesn't stand for Bharatiya Janata Party, it stands for 'Buthu' Janata Party." He accused the BJP of hypocrisy and silence on key national issues, including Chinese aggression. Referring to the Kaleshwaram Commission's notices to KCR, Harish Rao, and Etela Rajender, Dayakar welcomed the investigation and emphasized that no one is above the law, adding, "If KCR proves his honesty, I will garland him myself." He said the Congress government is committed to constitutional procedures and is not targeting anyone out of vengeance. Dayakar also responded to criticisms around Saraswati Pushkaram, clarifying that no public representatives were insulted, and dismissed any need for assigning blame in that matter. Speaking about former minister Etela Rajender, he questioned whether Etela joined BJP just to

protect KCR. "If someone has done wrong, they must go to jail – be it KCR, Harish, or Etela," Dayakar asserted, claiming that these three have all the necessary qualifications to be held accountable. He also attacked both the BRS and BJP, accusing them of turning Telangana into a "den of thieves". "What kind of project sees a pillar collapse within three years? KCR must answer for this," he said, questioning the structural failures in Kaleshwaram compared to long-standing structures like those in Srisailem. Dayakar didn't hold back against Union Minister Kishan Reddy either, calling him a "slave damaging the region". He questioned the BJP's silence on Chinese involvement with Pakistan and accused them of ignoring national security issues for political convenience. With these statements, MLC Addanki Dayakar has stirred the political atmosphere in Telangana, throwing a direct challenge to both BJP and BRS while firmly defending the Congress government's probe into the alleged corruption in Kaleshwaram.

# SLBC Tunnel Works to Resume Soon, Says Komatireddy Venkat Reddy

**TPN Correspondent | Nalgonda**  
Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy assured the people of Nalgonda that the long-stalled SLBC (Srisailem Left Bank Canal) tunnel project will resume soon and be completed within three years. He addressed the issue during a public event held at G Edavelli village on Tuesday. The Minister explained that the ambitious SLBC tunnel project, launched with an initial budget of ₹4,000 crore, had encountered serious setbacks due to structural faults. A section of the tunnel had collapsed, halting the work and delaying the much-needed irrigation benefits for farmers. However, he stated that the current government is determined to complete the project without further delays. "We are committed to resuming and completing the SLBC tun-

nel work within three years. It is a lifeline for our farmers, and all technical and administrative hurdles are being cleared," Komatireddy said. He also highlighted the government's efforts in healthcare development in the region. He announced the installation of a new advanced glaucoma screening machine at Kanagal hospital. The goal, he said, is to improve healthcare accessibility in rural areas and upgrade the hospital's facilities to match those of a district-level hospital. The resumption of SLBC tunnel works and healthcare upgrades reflect the government's broader effort to boost rural infrastructure and address long-pending developmental issues in Nalgonda district. Assures farmers of project completion within three years despite previous setbacks





# CID Takes Over Saroor Nagar Kidney Racket Investigation

- Case initially registered by Saroor Nagar police handed over to CID
- Ten accused including three doctors arrested; mastermind suspected abroad
- Around 90 kidney transplant operations linked to racket uncovered

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

The Telangana CID has officially taken over the investigation into the kidney transplant racket that was uncovered at Saroor Nagar Alaknanda Hospital. The case was initially registered by the Saroor Nagar police under the Rachakonda Commissionerate on January 21, but following a recent government order, the probe has now been transferred to the CID for a more detailed inquiry. Earlier, the police arrested ten accused, including three doctors involved in the racket. The prime accused, Pawan alias Leon from Visakhapatnam, has been identified as the mastermind behind the operation. Pawan allegedly convinced impoverished individuals from various states to sell their kidneys by promising monetary compensation. He then procured patients who



needed kidney transplants and arranged for doctors from Tamil Nadu and Kashmir to perform the surgeries at the Alaknanda Hospital. The racket reportedly spans multiple states, including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. However, Pawan is currently evading arrest, with a lookout circular issued amid

fears that he may have fled abroad, causing the earlier investigation to stall until the CID took charge. Investigations revealed that around 90 kidney transplant surgeries were conducted in the city by this gang. One significant player, Laxman from Visakhapatnam, acted as a middleman, offering commissions to small hospitals for facilitating these

operations. For instance, Dr. Siddamsetty at Janani Hospital, Saidabad, Hyderabad, performed over 40 such operations between 2023 and 2024 after receiving commissions of Rs. 2.5 lakh per surgery. Following the closure of Janani Hospital, another accused, Avinash, pressured Dr. Guntupalli Sumanth, MD of Saroor Nagar Alaknanda Hospital, to conduct these surgeries, paying him Rs. 1.5 lakh per operation and taking a commission of Rs. 1 lakh himself. Subsequently, more than 20 surgeries were done at Alaknanda Hospital, four at Aruna Hospital, and over ten at another unnamed hospital. The CID is now intensively investigating the full extent of this kidney racket, verifying the total number of surgeries performed and the network involved. Further updates are awaited as the probe progresses.

## Stop Crime, Boost Revenue: Telangana Excise Dept Review

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Telangana Excise Commissioner C. Hari Kiran and Enforcement Director Shahnawaz Qasim reviewed the department's performance on Tuesday at Excise Bhavan. The focus was on curbing crime and increasing revenue sources.

The meeting involved senior officers including Additional and Joint Commissioners, Deputy and Assistant Commissioners, and Excise Superintendents. They discussed crime rates and revenue transactions from January 25 to April.

Commissioner Hari Kiran urged officers to actively participate in planting 25 lakh palm trees and groves during the upcoming monsoon as part of the plantation program. He added that ministers will soon review the progress and emphasized the need for alertness.

Warning against drug misuse, the Commissioner highlighted strict action if incidents like the Kamareddy methanin misuse happen again. He called for strict vigilance on adulterated liquor including Alprazolam, Methane, Furious Liquor, and NDPL liquor. He also announced that the process of promotions and transfers at all levels is near completion.

Director Shahnawaz Qasim stressed the importance of cracking down on NDPL liquor. Additional Commissioner Syed Yasin Qureshi and Joint Commissioners K.A.B. Shastri and Suresh attended the meeting.



## Telangana Tops Nation in Phone Recovery

Hyderabad leads city-wise with over 11,000 devices traced



TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Telangana has achieved a national milestone by becoming the top state in India for recovering lost or stolen mobile phones. According to the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR) dashboard, a total of 78,114 mobile devices have been recovered in the state as of May 19. CID Director General Shikha Goel announced the achievement on Monday, May 20, noting that Telangana has set a new benchmark in mobile recovery operations. The Hyderabad commissionerate led the effort with 11,879 devices traced, followed by Cyberabad with 10,385, and Rachakonda with 8,681. Goel attributed this success to the proactive efforts of field officers who actively monitor and respond to citizen complaints through the CEIR platform. The CEIR portal, developed by the

Department of Telecommunications (DoT), aims to curb mobile phone theft and block counterfeit devices. Telangana's integration of the CEIR portal with its Police Citizen Portal has simplified the reporting process for the public. Residents can now easily lodge complaints regarding lost or stolen phones either on the Telangana Police website or directly through the CEIR portal. While CEIR was launched as a pilot in some states on September 5, 2022, Telangana officially adopted the system on April 19, 2023. The initiative is currently active in all 780 police stations across the state, with the CID serving as the nodal agency for its execution. The impressive results have placed Telangana at the forefront of digital policing and public service delivery in India.

## DCA Raids Illegal Medical Shop in Alwal, Seizes Medicines Worth Rs. 30,000

TPN Correspondent | Medchal-Malkajgiri

Drugs Control Administration (DCA), Telangana, conducted a raid on a medical shop in Alwal, Medchal-Malkajgiri District, found operating illegally without a valid drug license. The raid took place on 19th May 2025 at the premises located at D.No. 1-20-232/NR, Shutter No. 1&2, Bank Colony, West Venkatapuram.

The medical shop, run by Y.V. Subba Rao, was discovered stocking a large quantity of unauthorized medicines for sale. Officials seized 20 varieties of drugs, including antifungal medicines, analgesics, and drugs used for erectile dysfunction, with the stock valued at approximately Rs. 30,000.

The raid was carried out by a team led by Dr. K. Prabhakar, Assistant Director, Quthbullapur, along with Drugs Inspectors Sri K. Murali Krishna and Sri E. Thirupathi. Samples of the seized medicines have been lifted for further analysis. The DCA has warned wholesalers and dealers against supplying medicines to unlicensed shops. Such suppliers are liable for strict action under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and must ensure that buyers hold valid drug licenses before supply.

Operating without a drug license is a serious offense punishable by imprisonment for up to five years under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. Further investigations are underway, and the authorities have assured stringent action against all involved in this illegal activity.



## Theft at Raj Bhavan: Techie Held for Stealing Hard Disks

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

A theft at Telangana's Raj Bhavan, the official residence of the Governor, has sparked concern over security lapses at one of the state's most high-security zones. Four hard disks were found missing from computers in Sudharma Bhavan, a key building within the Raj Bhavan premises in Punjagutta.

Officials discovered the theft belatedly and reported it to Punjagutta police, who registered a case and launched an immediate investigation. The incident is believed to have occurred on May 13, but only came to light days later when Raj Bhavan staff noticed the missing hardware.

In a swift breakthrough, the police identified the accused as Srinivas, a computer hardware engineer employed at the Raj Bhavan. According to police sources, Srinivas was taken into custody for questioning and confessed to having committed the theft. He was subsequently arrested, produced before court, and sent to judicial remand.

Authorities are now working to determine what kind of sensitive information was stored on the stolen hard disks. Given the strategic nature of the Raj Bhavan and its confidential operations, the missing data has raised serious concerns.

Police say the investigation is ongoing and are exploring all possible motives behind the act — whether it was financially motivated or involved access to sensitive data. The incident has triggered a review of internal security protocols at the Governor's residence.



## Police Arrest Two Women for Cheating Elderly in Marriage Scam

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Mahankali police have arrested two women accused of cheating elderly individuals by falsely promising marriage. The scam came to light when Irukumati China Kondaiah, a resident of Madhira and Jamalapuram in Khammam district, reported losing Rs. 1.77 lakh last year after being deceived in the name of marriage.

The accused have been identified as Kataru Saraswathi (65) from Tiruvur in Krishna district and Koonapareddy Swathi (40) from Kothagudem in Khammam district. Both have been



taken into custody for further investigation. Police are probing the case to identify if more victims have been cheated in a similar manner.

## Another Fire Incident in Hyderabad

Fire breaks out in sandal warehouse in Boyaguda, panic among locals

TPN Correspondent | Hyderabad

Yet another fire incident has struck Hyderabad, creating panic among residents. A fire broke out this afternoon in a two-storey building located in Boyaguda under the Chhatrinaka police station limits, triggering fear among locals. According to reports, the fire originated on the second floor, where a sandal (shoe) warehouse was being operated. As thick smoke engulfed the building, people inside and around the structure rushed out in fear. Locals immediately alerted the authorities. Responding swiftly, Chhatrinaka police and the fire department arrived at the spot. Firefighters, using two



fire engines, battled the blaze and succeeded in bringing the fire under control before it could spread further. Preliminary information suggests the building housed a sandal storage

unit, though the exact cause of the fire is still under investigation. No casualties have been reported so far. This incident comes just two days after a deadly fire claimed 17 lives in a building near Gulzar House, raising growing concerns over fire safety in the city's commercial and residential areas. Local authorities are now expected to intensify inspections in vulnerable buildings.



# Judge Gives Birth at Govt Hospital

- Vemulawada Judge Jyothirmayi delivers baby boy in govt hospital
- Health Minister hails her for setting an example for public trust
- Second time she opted for same hospital; daughter born in 2023

**TPN Correspondent | Rajanna-Sircilla**  
In a rare and inspiring development, District Judge Jyothirmayi, serving at the Vemulawada District Court, gave birth to a healthy baby boy on Monday at the Vemulawada Government Hospital. The delivery was normal, according to hospital doctors. This marks the second time Judge Jyothir-

mayi has chosen to deliver at the same government facility, with her first child, a girl, born in 2023 at the same hospital. Her decision is being widely praised for boosting public confidence in government medical services. Locals, legal professionals, and officials hailed the move as an example of faith in public healthcare. Senior Court AGP Prashanth Kumar,

Bar Association President Gun-da Ravi, executive members, and fellow lawyers extended their congratulations, praising the judge for trusting state-run services and helping promote healthcare awareness among citizens. Health Minister Damodar Rajanarasimha took to Twitter to convey his best wishes to Judge Jyothirmayi. In his mes-

sage, he highlighted her trust in government healthcare institutions, emphasizing that such decisions reinforce the credibility of the public health system. He stated, “Congratulations to Judge Jyothirmayi on the birth of her baby boy. People should utilize the well-equipped and well-staffed government hospitals in our state. Under the democratic



government, our public health infrastructure has been significantly strengthened.” The Vemulawada Government Hospital has been lauded for providing quality care, and Judge Jyothirmayi’s back-to-back trust in the facility is being viewed as a strong endorsement of its services.

# Fatal Road Accident Near Rangapur in Vikarabad

**TPN Correspondent | Vikarabad**  
A serious road accident occurred near Rangapur in Parigi mandal, Vikarabad district, when a travel bus collided with a parked lorry. The tragic incident claimed the lives of four passengers and left more than 20 others seriously injured. All the victims were identified as residents of Chandanavelli village in Shabad mandal, Rangareddy district. The accident happened while they were returning from a party in Parigi. At the time of the crash, the bus was carrying 60 passengers. Due to the severity of injuries, six of the critically injured were shifted to a private hospital in Hyderabad for advanced treatment, while others were admitted to the Parigi Government Hospital. The rescue operation was challenging, with police and locals using a JCB machine to pull out the four bodies trapped inside the bus. The accident caused a significant traffic jam, stretching for several kilometers on the highway. Police are currently investigating the cause of the accident, considering whether it was due to the lorry being parked without proper signals on the highway or the bus driver falling asleep at the wheel. Further details will be released as the investigation progresses.



# Villagers block road Demanding Collapsed Bridge Reconstruction

Protest withdrawn after ASP assures tender by May 25

**TPN | Avinash Reddy**  
Bhadradri Kothagudem: Tension prevailed in Thurubaka village of Dummugudem mandal as BRS leaders and local villagers staged a dharna on the main road, demanding immediate reconstruction of a collapsed bridge. The protest was held on the Bhadrachalam-Venkatapuram road, leading to a two-kilometer traffic jam and halting vehicle movement for over an hour. The bridge in question had collapsed nearly a year ago, and since then, commuters have been facing severe difficulties. The absence of a proper bridge has resulted in 12 accidents, claiming five lives and leaving several others severely injured. In response to the inaction, villagers joined hands with BRS leaders and staged a sit-in protest near the damaged bridge. As the situation intensified, Dummugudem police reached the spot and tried to persuade the protestors to vacate the road. However, when the villagers stood firm on their demand, the police escalated the matter to Bhadrachalam ASP



Vikrant Kumar Singh IPS. Arriving promptly at the scene, ASP Singh interacted with the protestors and emphasized that blocking roads would only inconvenience the general public. He then contacted concerned officials and explained the gravity of the villagers’ situation. Officials informed him that tenders for the bridge reconstruction would be floated by the 25th of this month and that work would begin shortly after. Following this assurance, the

villagers and BRS leaders agreed to call off the protest but warned that if the process doesn’t begin by the promised date, they would resume the agitation. ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh later took the necessary steps to clear the traffic and ensured smooth passage for stranded vehicles. The incident highlighted the pressing need for quick infrastructure restoration in remote areas and the frustrations faced by rural communities due to prolonged delays.

# Transformer Blast Triggers Fire in Mandamarri

**TPN Correspondent | Mancherial**  
Tension prevailed in Mandamarri town of Mancherial district on Monday evening after a transformer exploded near the Veerabrahmendra Swamy temple, triggering a massive fire and panic among the locals. The incident occurred with a loud explosion, prompting people in the area to rush out of their homes in fear. Eyewitnesses reported that flames engulfed the transformer moments after the blast, and thick smoke filled the surrounding area. The fire also damaged power cables connected to nearby houses, temporarily disrupting electricity in the vicinity. Fortunately, no injuries or casualties were reported in the incident. Responding swiftly, the electricity department cut off the power supply to prevent further damage. Personnel from the DISCOM, police, and fire brigade arrived at the spot and successfully extinguished the fire, preventing it from spreading to nearby structures. Authorities are now investigating the cause of the explosion, while officials have assured that restoration work is underway and efforts are being made to restore normalcy in the area.



# ASP Vikrant Leads Tribal Outreach in Maoist-Affected Cherla



**TPN | Avinash Reddy**  
Bhadradri Kothagudem: As part of ongoing efforts to uplift tribal communities in Maoist-affected regions, the Cherla Police, under the instructions of District SP Rohit Raju IPS, organized a Commu-

nity Connect Program in Chennapuram village, situated near the Chhattisgarh border in Cherla mandal. Bhadrachalam ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh IPS took part in the program and conducted a de-

tailed inspection of every house in the village, which has long faced Maoist influence. The police team then interacted with the villagers and distributed clothes and essential supplies to women and children. In an encouraging move, sports kits, including volleyball sets, were handed over to the local youth to promote physical activity and engagement. Speaking at the event, ASP Vikrant Kumar Singh emphasized that the police department is committed to standing by the tribal population in these remote and vulnerable regions. “Under the leadership of District SP Rohit Raju IPS, we are working to provide essential services such as education, healthcare, and transport to tribal communities,” he stated.

He further urged villagers to remain vigilant and report any unfamiliar persons entering the village, cautioning them against offering support or shelter to banned Maoist groups. Residents of all 90 tribal families in Chennapuram actively participated in the event, including a large number of women, youth, and children. The initiative not only strengthened the bond between the police and the community but also highlighted the department’s commitment to development and security in sensitive areas. Cherla Circle Inspector Raju Varma, Sub-Inspectors Kesava and Narsi Reddy, along with CRPF and Special Party personnel, were also present during the outreach program.

# Five Tiger Poachers Detained; 20 Accused in Asifabad

## Tiger electrocuted, skin and nails recovered from accused

**TPN Correspondent | Kumram Bheem Asifabad**  
Forest officials have detained five poachers in connection with the recent electrocution and poaching of a tigress named K8 in Yellur village, Penchikalpet mandal. The investigation revealed nearly 20 habitual hunters linked to poaching networks in Maharashtra were involved. The crime came to light on May 15 when the electrocuted tigress was found. Officials said some poachers tapped power from nearby lines while others set electrified snares to kill the animal. After poaching, they skinned the tiger and extracted its nails and

hairs. Officials recovered the tiger’s skin buried in a eucalyptus plantation near Penchikalpet and seized nails and hair from suspects in ChinnarasPELLI and Penchikalpet mandals. Equipment used for hunting was also recovered. The area is known as a hotspot for wildlife hunting, with about 100 wild animals killed in similar ways in recent years. The forest department continues to probe to identify the specific roles of each accused. The female tiger K8 was a long-time resident of the district’s forests before falling victim to this brutal poaching incident.





# Kaleshwaram: A Holy Place Where Rivers & Beliefs Meet



Kaleshwaram, a small and holy town in the Jayashankar Bhupalapally district of Telangana, is hosting the Saraswati Pushkaralu, a special river festival that happens once every 12 years. This religious event takes place at the spot where two rivers-Godavari and Pranahita-meet. The town is located near the border of Telangana and Maharashtra. Kaleshwaram is most famous for its Kaleshwara Mukteshwara Swamy Temple, an ancient temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. What makes this temple unique is the presence of two Shiva Lingas placed on one base, which is a rare sight in India. This temple is also one of the three most important Shiva temples in the Telugu-speaking states, along with Srisailem and Draksharamam. These three temples together are called Trilinga Desham, meaning "land of three Lingas," and the area is considered very holy. To ensure a smooth and safe experience for visitors, the Telangana government has made extensive preparations for the festival. Telangana Endowments Minister Konda Surekha and IT & Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu are leading the efforts. Jayashankar Bhupalapally district Collector Rahul Sharma and SP Kiran Khare are also working hard on the ground with their teams. A mobile app and a website have been launched to provide important information and services to pilgrims. Basic needs such as water, food, toilets, and transport are also being taken care of to help the visiting devotees.



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## Ancient Temple with a Special Story

According to the Skanda Purana, a holy Hindu book, the Godavari River prayed to Lord Shiva, who appeared at this place as Mukteshwara Swamy. People who bathed in the river and saw the Lord were freed from sin and the cycle of birth and death. Seeing this, Yama, the god of death, became worried because no one was coming to his world. He also prayed to Shiva, who then asked him to install another Shiva Linga beside the first one. This new Linga was called Kaleshwara Linga. This is why the temple has two Lingas today, representing both salvation and the continuation of life. The temple is believed to be 850 years old, built during the rule of Kakatiya King Rudra Deva. The temple has four entrances, and each side has a statue of Nandi, the sacred bull of Lord Shiva. Inside, there are also shrines for Goddess Saraswati and the Sun God (Surya). It

is said that the water poured on the Lingas during rituals goes underground and finally reaches the Godavari River, which is about 1 kilometer away.

## Where Three Rivers Meet – A Place of Great Faith

Kaleshwaram is also known as Dakshina Triveni Sangam, which means the "southern meeting of three rivers"-Godavari, Pranahita, and a hidden river called Saraswati, believed to flow underground. This makes the place even more spiritual and powerful for religious rituals. Every year, thousands of people visit the temple, especially during Karthika Masam and Maha Shivaratri. Many devotees also come from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka. Kaleshwaram is about 270 kilometers from Hyderabad. Interestingly, Kaleshwaram lies on the same longitude as many other famous ancient Shiva temples in India, such as Kedarnath, Chidambaram, and Rameswaram. These temples were all built centuries ago, long before modern tools or satellite maps were available, which adds to the mystery and wonder of this alignment. As the Saraswati Pushkaralu festival continues, Kaleshwaram is ready to welcome lakhs of pilgrims from across the country. With its holy rivers, rare twin Shiva Lingas, and spiritual energy, this town is truly a must-visit for anyone seeking blessings, peace, and divine connection.

# Why India Needs a Grand Museum of Hindu Art

With the spotlight currently on Qatar for hosting ongoing Gaza peace talks, the country's cultural investments—like the stunning Museum of Islamic Art in Doha—are also drawing attention. Opened in 2008 and designed by the legendary architect I.M. Pei, the museum presents a rich and diverse collection of Islamic art spanning continents and centuries. But its scope is broader than it seems—many exhibits hail from pre-Islamic times or regions no longer under Muslim rule. This inclusive narrative is a deliberate counter to perceptions of Islamic iconoclasm, such as the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban in 2001.

The Doha museum's brilliance lies in positioning Islamic art not just as religious output but as the cultural expression of regions influenced by Islam. This reframing—presenting "art from the Islamic world" rather than strictly "Islamic art"—reclaims civilizational prestige through art, echoing Christian traditions that link religious belief to artistic excellence, especially in periods



like the Renaissance.

In comparison, other religions have yet to create institutions on this scale. While Jewish and Buddhist art museums exist, none offer the vast civilizational sweep that Doha's museum achieves. Surprisingly, no comparable project exists for Hindu art—despite Hinduism's profound and far-reaching influence on art, architecture, mathematics, and astronomy, especially across South and Southeast Asia.

India is uniquely positioned to correct this omission. A grand Museum of Hindu Art could illuminate the expansive cul-

tural and aesthetic footprint of Hinduism—not only within Indian borders but across ancient trade routes and former Hindu-influenced kingdoms in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and even parts of the Middle East.

Such a museum would enrich both global understanding and self-perception among Hindus. It could reclaim narratives often limited to Buddhist and Islamic contributions to Indian art, offering a more comprehensive picture. More importantly, it could highlight the ongoing dialogue between Hinduism and other artistic traditions across centuries.

# The Indian Intellectual Syndrome

## Selective outrage, loud in Protest, Silent in Responsibility



In India, a section of the intellectual class has fallen into a predictable pattern—what one might call the Indian Intellectual Syndrome. This mindset treats government action with automatic suspicion, celebrates contrarianism as a virtue, and mistakes rhetorical superiority for civic duty. The result is a self-reinforcing loop of negativity, where criticism is the only currency and accountability applies to everyone except those doing the criticizing.

## The Pattern of Selective Outrage

### Pulwama., Pahalgam and Balakot: Questioning the State, Ignoring the Enemy

After the 2019 Pulwama terror attack that killed 40 Indian paramilitary personnel, many so-called intellectuals were quick to question the government's intelligence failure, diplomatic strategy, and even motives. But few, if any, issued direct, unequivocal condemnation of the Pakistan-backed Jaish-e-Mohammed that claimed responsibility. Instead, the narrative shifted to questioning the government's response: Was Balakot airstrike "staged"? Was it politically timed? Was it even effective? Little attention was paid by these intellectuals to the ideological and logistical machinery behind the attack. Instead, the dominant commentary questioned the state's intentions, deflecting public focus from the actual perpetrator. Contrast this with the global intellectual response to the 9/11 attacks in the U.S.—there was criticism, yes, but also a firm moral consensus against terrorism. In India, that moral clarity often goes missing.

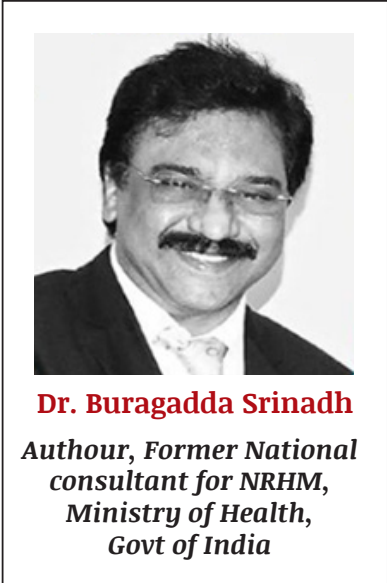
## Human Rights for Whom?

When convicted terrorist Afzal Guru was hanged for his role in the 2001 Parliament attacks, many Indian intellectuals didn't mourn the victims or examine the terror ecosystem. Instead, they protested Guru's hanging as "judicial murder." Seminars were held. Petitions were signed. Sympathies were extended—not to the families of the security personnel who died—but to the man convicted of planning the attack.

Even in the case of Yakub Memon, convicted for financing and planning the 1993 Mumbai blasts, candlelight vigils were organized and narratives of injustice were spun. Courts had upheld the convictions after lengthy due process. Yet the intellectual class chose symbolism over truth, sentiment over justice.

## No Responsibility to Educate or Reform society

### Abrogation of Article 370: Defending Structures,



**Dr. Buragadda Srinadh**  
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## Ignoring the Outcomes

When Article 370 was abrogated in Jammu & Kashmir, the global and local elite rushed to defend the "special status," but hardly acknowledged how that very status isolated Kashmiris from the rest of India and shielded terror sympathizers. The focus was not on the 30 years of violence, ethnic cleansing of Kashmiri Pandits, or Pakistan's role in radicalization—but on internet shutdowns and "loss of autonomy." Rather than engaging with the complexities of the decision—including its potential to restore equality among citizens—many chose to frame it solely as a "constitutional assault," overlooking the lived reality of those affected by decades of terrorism and displacement. These intellectuals rarely, if ever, focus on grassroots reform. They don't run deradicalization programs, create educational tools to combat hate, or work in conflict zones to build trust. They write—but only to negate. They debate—but only to dismantle. They critique every policy but propose no constructive alternative.

## Contrarianism as an Identity for these intellectuals

In today's intellectual climate, siding with the state is considered "unintellectual." Supporting national security measures is branded "majoritarian." Speaking against terrorists is seen as "jingoism." In fact, the quickest way to be accepted into elite intellectual circles is to oppose whatever the majority supports—regardless of merit. This is not intellectual honesty. It's intellectual posturing. A true intellectual can criticize power without losing sight of right and wrong. A true public thinker should guide society toward solutions—not just bask in academic cynicism.

## Intellectualism with out Responsibility

This trend reflects a deeper erosion of civic responsibility. While there is no shortage of opinion columns or televised

debates, there is minimal effort among many public intellectuals to offer alternatives, educate the masses, or build bridges between communities. Their engagement remains confined to elite circles, detached from the real-world implications of their narratives. What is missing is intellectual courage—the courage to speak out against terrorism without qualification, to support effective policies even if implemented by an opposing party, and to serve the public beyond mere rhetoric.

## Time for a Reckoning

### Final Reflections: Freedom of Speech vs. Abuse of Influence

At the heart of this phenomenon lies a fundamental contradiction: the very intellectuals who champion freedom of speech often misuse that freedom not to enlighten or uplift, but to destabilize and divide. When influential voices consistently defend the indefensible, amplify fringe narratives, and undermine national unity under the pretense of dissent, their impact is not just misguided—it becomes destructive.

Democracy protects dissent. But democracy also expects responsibility from those who influence public thought. When criticism becomes a tool for obstruction rather than reform, when human rights are used to shield terrorists but not their victims, and when free speech is reduced to habitual negativity, it ceases to be a pillar of liberty and becomes a weapon of ideological sabotage.

The role of public intellectuals is to challenge with conscience, speak with balance, and guide with vision. Today, far too many have traded that responsibility for theatrics, self-promotion, and polarizing postures. The result is a cultural atmosphere where skepticism is worshipped, but solutions are nowhere in sight.

In this light, the role many of these intellectuals now play is not constructive, but corrosive—weakening the social fabric, delegitimizing democratic institutions, and enabling narratives that embolden extremist ideologies. It is time to call this out, not to silence them, but to demand better from those who claim to speak for the nation's conscience.

## Intellectual voice and noise

- **Condemn the government, never the terrorists.**
- **Write pages of protest, but offer no solutions.**
- **Shout about human rights—only for the guilty.**
- **Misuse freedom of speech to weaken national unity.**
- **Avoid real reform. Embrace elite echo chambers.**
- **Is this intellectualism—or ideological sabotage?**
- **India needs thinkers, not habitual cynics.**
- **Builders, not destroyers.**
- **Voices of courage, not cowardice.**



# PM Modi Promotes India’s Health Model at World Health Assembly

Offers Sustainable Approach To Global South's Health Challenges



**TPN Correspondent | Delhi**  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented India's health reforms as a model for global health at the 78th World Health Assembly in Geneva on Tuesday, emphasizing the country's inclusive and scalable health initiatives. Speaking via videoconferencing, Modi highlighted the importance of caring for vulnerable populations, stating that the health of the world depends on this principle. He further argued that India's approach to health is both replicable and sustainable, offering valuable lessons for the Global South, which faces significant health challenges.

In his address, the Prime Minister pointed to India's flagship health insurance program, Ayushman Bharat, as a standout example. Cov-

ering over 580 million people, this scheme offers free medical treatment, and Modi revealed that it has been recently expanded to include all citizens above the age of 70. "Inclusion is at the core of India's health reforms," he said, underlining that this year's theme of the Assembly, One World For Health, aligns closely with India's global health vision. Modi also reflected on his address at last year's World Health Assembly, where he introduced the concept of One Earth, One Health, emphasizing the interconnectedness of global health. He reiterated that the future of a healthy world depends on cooperation, inclusion, and an integrated vision.

Highlighting the role of technology in improving health outcomes, Modi discussed India's digital

health initiatives, which include platforms to track vaccinations for pregnant women and children, as well as a national digital health identity system. "Our free telemedicine service has enabled over 340 million consultations," he said, stressing the role of technology in bridging gaps in healthcare access.

India's health reforms have also led to a significant reduction in out-of-pocket healthcare expenses, while government health expenditure has increased considerably, according to Modi. He concluded by reiterating India's commitment to global cooperation in tackling future pandemics, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of a healthier world.

## Kannada Actress Ranya Rao Granted Bail in Gold Smuggling Case But Remains in Jail Under COFEPOSA



**TPN Correspondent | Delhi**  
Kannada actress Ranya Rao, who was arrested in March for allegedly smuggling gold bars worth ₹14.56 crore, was granted bail on Tuesday by the Special Court for Economic Offences. However, the actor will continue to remain in Bengaluru Central Prison, as she has also been detained under the stringent Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSA), 1974. This law allows preventive detention without bail for up to a year.

Ranya Rao, the stepdaughter of senior IPS officer Ramachandra Rao, was arrested after being caught with 14.2 kg of gold at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport on March 3 upon her arrival from Dubai. Officials grew suspicious due to her frequent travels — 27 trips to Dubai in the past year, including four within 15 days — and her methods of concealment, reportedly wearing some gold and hiding the rest in her clothes.

Along with co-accused Tarun Kondaru Raju, Rao was granted statutory bail after

the court observed that the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) failed to file a charge sheet within the stipulated time-frame. The court approved their release on a personal bond of ₹2 lakh each and two sureties, imposing strict conditions including a ban on international travel without court permission, mandatory court appearances, and a prohibition on tampering with evidence or influencing witnesses.

Despite bail, Rao will remain behind bars as COFEPOSA was invoked in April by the DRI, citing her lack of cooperation and concern that she may resume smuggling activities if released.

Investigators also recovered over ₹2 crore worth of gold jewellery and ₹2.67 crore in cash from Rao's residence during raids. In a leaked statement, Rao admitted to carrying 17 gold bars and disclosed travel details involving the Middle East and Western countries. Her stepfather, Ramachandra Rao, has publicly distanced himself from her activities, claiming he had not been in contact with her since her marriage and expressing shock over the allegations. He maintained that his career remains untainted and denied any involvement in her affairs.

## Bengaluru flooded but Congress celebrates: BJP slams anniversary event timing



**TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru**  
As torrential rains wreaked havoc in Bengaluru, flooding key areas and claiming three lives, the Karnataka Congress government faced sharp criticism from the BJP for going ahead with a grand celebration to mark its two years in power. The event, titled Samarpna Sankalpa Samavesha, was held in Hosapete on Tuesday, even as large parts of the state capital struggled with severe water-logging and infrastructure failures.

While Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar welcomed Congress national leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi at Jindal Vijayanagara Airport, several Bengaluru neighbourhoods such as Sai Layout, Manyata Tech Park, and Silk Board Junction were submerged due to continuous rainfall over the past 48 hours. Roads became unmotorable, emergency responses were delayed, and complaints over poor drainage infrastructure flooded social media.

Despite briefly visiting the BBMP War Room for updates, both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar were physically absent from the worst-hit areas. BJP leaders seized the opportunity to attack the Congress government, accusing it of being "tone-deaf" and "irresponsible."

State BJP President BY Vijayendra said, "Three people have lost their lives, and instead of managing the crisis, the Congress is busy celebrating. The government has shown complete disregard for the suffering of Bengalureans." He also criticized Home Minister G Parameshwara for blaming citizens for the flooding, calling the comment "arrogant and unacceptable."

Former Deputy Chief Minister Ashwath Narayan echoed the sentiment, calling the event "utterly insensitive." He accused the Congress government of failing to deliver on infrastructure and governance over the past two years, and labelled it a "government of scams and slogans."

Meanwhile, the Congress defended its decision to proceed with the event, pointing to its welfare-focused policies and asserting that senior officials were actively monitoring the situation. Party insiders claimed that necessary relief operations were being carried out on the ground and that the CM and DyCM were overseeing efforts remotely.

The situation has spotlighted the growing tension between governance and optics in Karnataka, with opposition leaders demanding more direct accountability from the ruling party during times of crisis.

## Indian Travelers Shun Turkey and Azerbaijan Amid Geopolitical Tensions, Visa Drop Hits 42%

**TPN Correspondent | Delhi**  
Amid recent geopolitical developments that have stirred national sentiment, Indian travelers are increasingly turning away from Turkey and Azerbaijan. According to data released by visa processing platform Atlys on Tuesday, visa applications to both countries have plunged by a sharp 42%, following public expressions of support for Pakistan by Ankara and Baku.

The response from Indian travelers was swift and pronounced. Within just 36 hours of the statements, Atlys reported a 60% surge in users abandoning their visa applications mid-process. "The reaction wasn't scattered; it was sharp and behavioral," said Mohak Nahta, Founder and CEO of Atlys. "People didn't need to be told to avoid certain destinations. They simply moved



on, guided by instinct, information, and access to alternatives. That's what modern travel looks like."

Nahta added that Atlys responded to the trend by pausing all marketing efforts for Turkey and Azerbaijan "in solidarity with national sentiment."



Travel data showed varying levels of decline based on geography. Metro cities like Delhi and Mumbai saw Turkey-bound applications fall by 53%, while tier-2 cities such as Indore and Jaipur showed a comparatively modest 20% decline. Group travelers—typically families and tour groups—seemed the most sensitive to political cues, with group visa requests drop-

ping by nearly 49%. In contrast, solo and couple applications showed a smaller dip of 27%. The data suggests that group travelers, who often plan well in advance, were more decisive in altering travel plans. Demographically, travelers aged 25 to 34 were the most responsive to the developments, making up over 70% of the application drop-offs for Turkey. Women travelers were notably more likely to change course altogether, with a 2.3 times higher likelihood of restarting visa applications for destinations in Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam and Thailand.

As Turkey and Azerbaijan lost appeal, alternate destinations like Vietnam, Indonesia, and Egypt witnessed a rise in visa applications, spiking by as much as 31%, reflecting a quick shift in travel interest shaped by current affairs.



# Trump’s Immigration Crackdown Sparks Fear and Labor Shortages

Crackdown On Undocumented Immigrants Hits Washington Restaurants

TPN Correspondent | Washington

President Donald Trump’s renewed crackdown on undocumented immigrants is sending shockwaves through Washington, D.C.’s restaurant industry, as surprise visits by immigration enforcement agents have prompted fear, staff departures, and concerns over long-term labor shortages.

Earlier this month, armed Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents made an unannounced visit to Papatella, a popular pizzeria in Dupont Circle. Although no arrests were made, the agents demanded to inspect I-9 employment eligibility forms. Lacking a warrant or documentation, they were turned away. However, they later returned to another Papatella location with a formal “notice of inspection.”

“We’ve never experienced anything like this,” said Natasha Neely, vice president of Papatella. “These notices are usually sent via email. Showing up like that was clearly intended to intimidate.”

ICE reported arresting 189 undocumented individuals in the D.C. area from May 6 to May 9 after issuing 187 inspection notices. The agency described the operation as targeting “criminal alien offenders,” although businesses affected say the approach has caused broader disruption.

Restaurants, long reliant on immigrant labor, are feeling the impact. “Undocumented migrants are the backbone of our



industry,” said Shawn Townsend, president of the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington (RAMW). “From dishwashers to chefs, they are vital.”

Trump’s second-term focus on immigration enforcement echoes his first-term policies, with thousands already deported and legal challenges mounting over alleged violations of due process.

The fear among workers is palpable. One restaurant owner, who spoke anonymously, said that following ICE’s visit, many staff with uncertain work status simply stopped showing up. “They were told by advocates to lay low. We’re not

sure who will return,” he said.

A recent survey by employment law firm Littler Mendelson found that 58% of business executives fear Trump’s policies will worsen labor shortages, especially in hospitality and manufacturing.

Neely said Papatella is now educating its staff about their legal rights. “We’ve briefed our team on how to respond, but the sight of armed agents in federal uniforms is always unnerving,” she said. As enforcement intensifies, Washington’s restaurants brace for further disruption—both operational and emotional.

## "Want To End War But Not Sure If Russia Is Ready": Zelensky

TPN Correspondent | Kyiv

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has reiterated his country’s willingness to pursue a full ceasefire to end the ongoing war with Russia, but expressed skepticism over Moscow’s commitment to peace. His remarks came after holding talks with U.S. President Donald Trump and other European leaders regarding potential ceasefire negotiations.

Speaking on Monday, Zelenskyy said Ukraine remains ready to accept a ceasefire without preconditions, a proposal initially introduced by Trump. However, he emphasized that Ukraine needs to see “concrete actions” from Russia before it can fully trust any peace initiative. “Too many lives have been lost. We really want to finish this war. But I’m not sure that Russia is ready, and we don’t trust them,” Zelenskyy stated.

According to Zelenskyy, Russia has indicated a willingness to outline its own “principles” for a ceasefire, including additional terms beyond just halting hostil-



ities. “From our dialogue with U.S. President Trump, it seems the Russian side wants to send a memo on how they see the principles of ending the war—not just a ceasefire, but more,” he noted.

Zelenskyy expressed appreciation for Trump’s initiative, calling the proposed unconditional ceasefire a positive step. “I was very happy when President Trump proposed a full ceasefire without any conditions or preconditions. We’ve been ready for this,” he said, reaffirming Ukraine’s position.

The Ukrainian leader also stressed that a ceasefire must be followed by additional steps, including a humanitarian exchange of prisoners and broader diplomatic engagement. “These are our principles: ceasefire first, and then other steps like prisoner exchanges,” Zelenskyy explained.

Zelenskyy has maintained consistent communication with international partners, including the United States and European Union members. He confirmed Ukraine’s openness to direct negotiations with Russia, contingent on a verifiable commitment from Moscow.

This diplomatic momentum comes amid Trump’s recent announcement that both Russia and Ukraine are expected to begin immediate negotiations, with the Vatican offering to facilitate peace efforts.

While hopes for a breakthrough remain cautious, Zelenskyy’s message was clear: Ukraine is ready for peace—if Russia truly is.

## UK Professor Nitasha Kaul Says India Revoked OCI Over ‘Anti-India Activities’

TPN Correspondent | London

British-Kashmiri academic Nitasha Kaul, a Professor of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster in London, has claimed that the Government of India has cancelled her Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) over alleged “anti-India activities.”

Taking to social media on Sunday, Kaul revealed that she received an official communication from Indian authorities accusing her of “malice and complete disregard for facts or history” in her writings and speeches. The academic said the cancellation follows her earlier public statements in February, when she was denied entry into India to attend a conference in Bengaluru.



“Know that arresting academics in India for speaking against hate is closely tied to removing access to country and family for academics outside India,” Kaul wrote on X (formerly Twitter). “The idea is to send a signal — don’t dare challenge us within and don’t dare analyse what’s

going on to convey to audiences outside,” she added.

According to India’s rules governing OCI holders, the government has the authority to revoke OCI status if it determines that the individual has shown “disaffection towards the Constitution of India as established by law.”

Kaul, who also serves as Director of the Centre for the Study of Democracy at Westminster, shared a portion of the cancellation document she received. The notice reportedly cites her “numerous inimical writings, speeches and journalistic activities at various international forums and on social media platforms,” which Indian authorities allege target “India and its institutions on the matters of India’s sovereignty.”

## Covid-19 Cases Surge Across Asia Amid Rise of JN.1 Variant: Key Affected Countries and Trends



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

A fresh wave of Covid-19 is sweeping across parts of Asia, with several countries reporting sharp increases in infections, hospitalisations, and viral activity. The spike, driven by the emerging JN.1 variant and post-holiday gatherings, has prompted public health authorities to issue fresh advisories and call for booster vaccinations, particularly for vulnerable groups.

In Hong Kong, health officials have sounded the alarm over the “quite high” virus activity in the city. The percentage of respiratory samples testing positive for Covid-19 recently hit a 12-month high. In the week ending May 3, Hong Kong recorded 31 severe cases—its highest in a year—along with rising Covid-related medical consultations and sewage surveillance data pointing to active transmission.

Singapore has also experienced a notable jump in Covid-19 cases, with infections rising 28% to 14,200 in the week ending May 3. Daily hospitalisations surged by about 30%, marking the first time in nearly a year that Singapore’s health ministry has issued a detailed update. Authorities attributed the spike to waning immunity but clarified that current variants, including JN.1, do not appear to cause more severe illness than before.

In Thailand, the situation is more acute. Weekly Covid-19 cases doubled from 16,000 to over 33,000 in the week ending May 17. Bangkok alone recorded 6,290 cases, followed by Chon Buri, Rayong, and Nonthaburi. Most infections occurred in individuals aged 30 to 39. Health officials believe the spike is linked to gatherings during April’s Songkran festival and are urging high-risk individuals to get booster shots immediately.

China is also seeing an upward trend. Between March 31 and May 4, the national Covid-19 positivity rate among outpatient and emergency flu-like illnesses surged from 7.5% to 16.2%. Hospitalised case positivity also nearly doubled, signaling a possible early stage of a summer wave similar to last year’s.

In India, while the situation remains under control with only 257 active cases reported, health authorities are on alert and closely monitoring trends across Asia.

The JN.1 variant has not been flagged as more severe, but its rapid spread reinforces the need for vigilance, vaccinations, and readiness to manage potential outbreaks.

## 14,000 Babies In Gaza Could Die In Next 48 Hours, Warns UN

TPN Correspondent | Gaza

The United Nations has issued a dire warning, stating that up to 14,000 babies in Gaza could die within the next 48 hours unless critical humanitarian aid is allowed to enter the war-torn enclave. The warning comes as Israeli authorities continue to allow only a limited amount of aid to cross into Gaza, following over 11 weeks of a near-total blockade. International pressure, particularly from the United States, Canada, France, and the United Kingdom, has led to this slight shift in Israeli policy.

On Monday, only five trucks carrying aid, including baby food, entered Gaza—far from what is needed to address the overwhelming crisis. UN humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher described this as a “drop in the ocean” given the severity of the situation. He emphasized that aid had yet to reach the areas where it is most urgently needed, particularly for the countless families unable to feed their malnourished children.

Fletcher spoke to BBC’s Radio 4, warning that unless more aid is allowed in immediately, thousands of babies could die. “There are 14,000 babies that will die in the next 48 hours unless we can reach them,” he said. “We run all sorts of risks trying to get that baby food through to those mothers who cannot feed their children right now.” The UN’s statement followed a joint condemnation from the leaders of the UK, France, and Canada, who criticized Israel’s continued blockade and the rhetoric from members of Prime Minister Netanyahu’s government, who have threatened to displace large numbers of Palestinians. In their joint statement, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron, and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney warned of potential international action if the restrictions on humanitarian aid were not lifted.



# Markets Nosedive as Global Cues Weigh Heavy; Nifty Sheds 261 Points, Sensex Crashes 872

Domestic stock markets were volatile on Tuesday. Benchmark indices fell sharply as investors took profit booking amid negative signals from international markets, rising US debt borrowing costs, downgrading of US bonds and selling in auto, defense, finance, healthcare, media and FMCG sectors. Overall, investors lost Rs 4 lakh crore as Nifty fell 261 points and Sensex fell 872 points. The market outlook is negative in the short term.

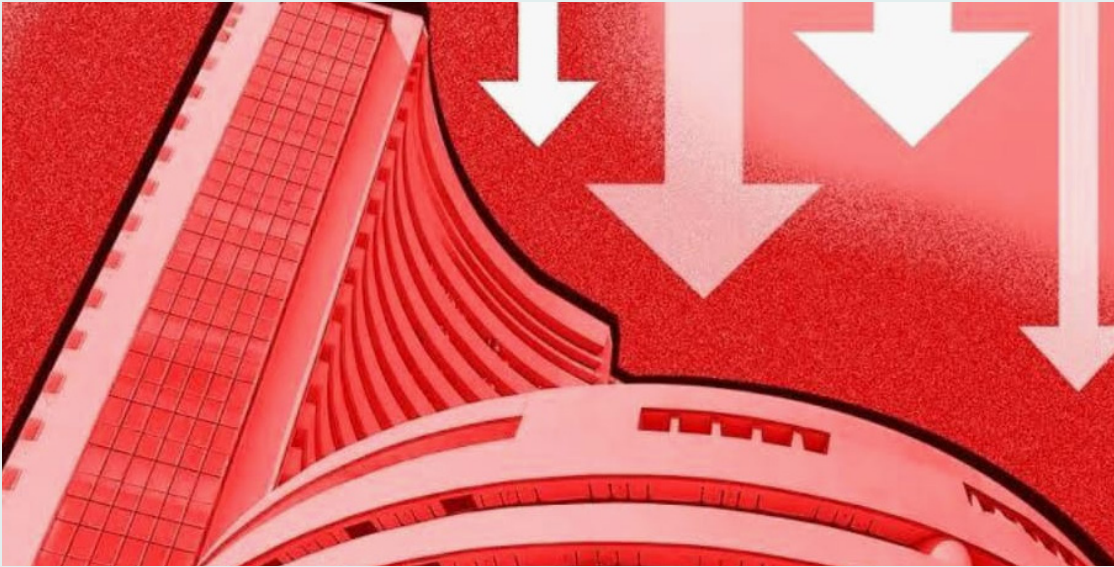


The BSE Sensex, which closed at 82,059 in the previous session, opened at 82,116 on Tuesday. It touched an intraday low of 81,153. It reached an intraday high of 82,250. It finally closed at 81,186, down 872 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 24,996, touched a low of 24,669 and a high of 25,010. It closed at 24,683, down 261 points. The Nifty Bank fell 543 points to settle at 54,877.

In the Nifty50, 7 companies gained while 43 lost. Coal India, Tata Steel, Hindalco, ONGC, Dr. Reddy's were the top gainers. Eternal, Hero Moto, Bajaj Auto, Maruti, Shriram Finance lost the most. Mid and smallcap indices were mixed today. Auto, finance, healthcare, media, FMCG, pharma, realty, private bank, PSU bank, consumer durables, oil, telecom, metal, IT indices rose.

Market breadth in NSE today turned in favor of sellers. Out of a total of 2969 shares traded, 915 gained and 1974 lost. 49 shares reached the 52-week high and 18 shares reached the 52-week low. 117 shares reached the upper circuit and 55 shares reached the lower circuit.

20 lakh shares changed hands in GAIL. Max Healthcare's net profit grew by 21% to Rs. 376 crore, while net income grew by 29% to Rs. 2,326 crore. Hindalco's net profit grew by 10.5% to Rs 1561 crore and revenue grew by 13.4% to Rs 25,116 crore. Nazara Technologies acquired Britain's Curve Games for Rs 247 crore. Kirloskar Industries' net profit was Rs 46.8 crore, revenue was Rs 1747 crore and EB-ITA was Rs 205 crore. Zydus Life Sciences' net profit was Rs 1171 crore and revenue reached Rs 6528 crore. SEBI approved the IPOs of Gem Aromatics, Jason's Ind, Caliber Mining, Shree Lotus Developers, Euro Pratik and Credila Fin. Kiri Industries shares rose by 8% today. Nuama analysts estimated that cement prices have increased in many parts of the country due to demand. US debt costs have increased due to Donald Trump's tax bill and Moody's downgrade.



## 1. Dr. Reddy's Laboratories (DRREDDY)

Dr. Reddy's continues to remain a solid performer in the pharmaceutical space. Despite some volatility, the stock is supported by strong fundamentals. The company has recently launched new generics in the U.S. market and maintains a healthy product pipeline. For FY25, revenue and profit have seen steady growth, with improving margins due to cost optimization. However, recent sessions showed mild weakness possibly due to profit booking and sector rotation. Long-term outlook remains positive, especially with a focus on U.S. generics, biosimilars, and emerging markets.



## 2. Tata Motors

Tata Motors remains one of the most actively tracked auto stocks. The company posted strong Q4FY25 results, driven by robust JLR performance, domestic commercial vehicle sales, and electric vehicle (EV) growth. The stock recently reached multi-year highs, backed by high investor confidence in its EV roadmap and improved operating efficiency. Margin improvement and debt reduction are further positives. Analysts remain bullish with multiple brokerages revising target prices upwards.



## 3. LIC of India

LIC has seen a steady performance after a volatile start post its IPO. The insurer reported healthy premium growth and an improved solvency ratio. In the recent quar-



ter, LIC posted better-than-expected net profit, aided by higher investment income and lower payouts. Despite competition in the life insurance sector, LIC remains a market leader by a wide margin. The stock remains attractively valued compared to private peers, though it tends to be impacted by broader PSU sentiment and government disinvestment speculation.

## 4. Coal India

Coal India continues to benefit from strong domestic demand and higher realization per tonne. The stock has seen a steady uptrend in recent months as coal demand for power generation rises. The company reported robust earnings with strong dividend payouts. Operational efficiency and government support for coal-based energy stability make it a strong defensive play. However, environmental and ESG-related concerns remain long-term overhangs.



## 5. Larsen & Toubro (L&T)

L&T remains a bellwether in the capital goods and infrastructure segment. The company posted strong order inflows, especially from domestic infrastructure, defense, and international energy projects. Revenue and profit growth in Q4FY25 remained in line with expectations, and its order book remains at record highs. L&T's continued focus on asset-light businesses and return ratios makes it a favorite among institutional investors. The stock remains a long-term wealth creator backed by India's infra and capex cycle.



# Regulatory Delays and Lack of Transparency Can Undermine FTA Progress: Nirmala Sitharaman

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has warned that delays in regulatory approvals and lack of transparency in the clearance process can severely impact the timely conclusion of free trade agreements (FTAs) and diminish the value of global business transactions. Her remarks came while addressing the 16th Annual Day celebrations of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) on May 20, 2025.



"In today's interconnected and fast-paced economy, delays in regulatory clearance can lead to uncertainty, disrupt commercial timelines, and potentially erode the intended value of transactions," said Ms. Sitharaman. She emphasized that such delays have repercussions not only within domestic markets but also at the international level, particularly during ongoing FTA negotiations with various nations.

The Finance Minister's statement is especially timely as Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal is currently in the United States for discussions aimed at finalizing a long-anticipated free trade agreement between the two countries. Simultaneously, India is engaged in parallel FTA negotiations with the European Union and New Zealand, making regulatory clarity and efficiency more critical than ever.

Ms. Sitharaman underscored the need for streamlined, predictable, and transparent regulatory processes to ensure that India remains a credible and competitive trade partner on the global stage. She noted that unpredictable regulatory hurdles can deter investors and create an environment of hesitation and doubt, both of which are detrimental to trade and investment flows.

Her remarks were made in the broader context of enhancing the role of institutions like the Competition Commission of India in ensuring fair competition and fostering a conducive business environment. She called for stronger inter-agency coordination and a commitment to regulatory reforms to minimize friction in deal-making processes.

As India intensifies its global trade engagements, the message from the Finance Minister serves as a clear reminder that efficient regulatory mechanisms are essential not only for economic stability but also for securing India's place in the evolving international trade landscape.

# Supreme Court Rejects AGR Relief Pleas by Vodafone, Airtel, and Tata Teleservices

In a significant development for the Indian telecom sector, the Supreme Court on Monday, May 19, 2025, dismissed petitions filed by Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea, and Tata Teleservices seeking relief in the payment of their adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues. The apex court categorically termed the petitions as "misconceived," effectively closing the door on any legal recourse regarding the financial liabilities stemming from the long-standing AGR case.



A Bench comprising Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan delivered the verdict, rejecting the telcos' request to reconsider the components of their dues, specifically the interest on the principal amount, penalties, and interest on the penalty. The companies had argued for waivers or adjustments, citing financial stress and the disproportionate burden these components imposed.

The Supreme Court, however, reiterated its earlier rulings on the matter and emphasized the finality of its judgments. The Bench noted that any reconsideration of the dues at this stage would set a precedent that undermines judicial sanctity and accountability in the regulatory framework.

The AGR dispute has been a long-running issue in the telecom industry, dating back over a decade. The case centers around the definition of AGR, which includes not just core telecom revenues but also non-core income such as interest, dividend, and rent.

The Supreme Court had previously ruled in favor of the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), ordering telecom operators to pay outstanding dues as per the expanded definition.

With this latest verdict, the financial burden on the telecom operators remains substantial, particularly for Vodafone Idea, which continues to struggle with mounting debt and losses. Bharti Airtel, while financially more stable, also faces significant payouts. The companies have already made partial payments, but large sums are still outstanding.

This ruling reaffirms the judiciary's stand on the AGR matter and signals limited judicial tolerance for re-litigation of settled issues. It also places the onus on the government and regulatory bodies to explore any policy-based solutions, should they choose to extend any form of relief to the sector moving forward.

# Rupee Weakens by 13 Paise to 85.55 Against U.S. Dollar Amid Subdued Market Sentiment

In early trade on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, the Indian rupee declined by 13 paise to settle at 85.55 against the U.S. dollar. This depreciation comes in the wake of a muted performance in domestic equity markets and continued outflows of foreign funds, reflecting a broader sense of caution among investors.



Forex market analysts attribute the rupee's weakness to a combination of global and domestic factors. A key contributor has been the recent rise in the U.S. 10-year Treasury yield, which has sparked concerns over America's fiscal health and the direction of its monetary policy. The surge in bond yields has pushed up borrowing costs globally, although ironically, it has also led to a decline in the Dollar Index, which measures the strength of the U.S. dollar against a basket of major currencies.

Despite the fall in the Dollar Index, the rupee continues to face pressure due to a lack of strong domestic cues and an ongoing exodus of foreign capital. Equity markets in India opened on a subdued note, with investors awaiting fresh economic data and policy signals. This cautious approach is further compounded by global uncertainties and tightening financial conditions, which have increased the appeal of safe-haven assets.

Experts suggest that unless there is a significant

improvement in market sentiment or a reversal in capital flows, the rupee may remain under pressure in the short term. Additionally, geopolitical tensions and oil price fluctuations are also likely to influence the domestic currency's trajectory.

Market participants will closely monitor statements from the U.S. Federal Reserve and India's upcoming economic indicators for cues on future movement. For now, traders are bracing for continued volatility as macroeconomic headwinds persist.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has so far refrained from major intervention, but its stance could shift if the rupee experiences sharper declines. Meanwhile, importers may face increased costs, while exporters could see short-term gains due to the weaker currency.



# World Press Photo Suspends Credit for Iconic ‘Napalm Girl’ Image Amid Authorship Dispute

One of the most powerful and iconic images from the Vietnam War — the Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph of a terrified, naked nine-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc running from a napalm attack — is now at the center of a growing controversy.

World Press Photo, which honored the image as its 1973 “Photo of the Year,” has announced it is suspending attribution to long-credited photographer Nick Ut of the Associated Press (AP), following a fresh investigation into the image’s authorship.

The decision stems from new claims brought to light by The Stringer, a documentary that premiered at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival. The film suggests that Vietnamese freelance photographer Nguyen Thanh Nghe, not Mr. Ut, may have actually taken the photograph on June 8, 1972, near the village of Trang Bang.

According to the documentary, Nghe was among several photographers present when South Vietnamese planes mistakenly dropped napalm on a group of civilians. The film alleges Nghe captured the image and later sold it to AP, which credited staff photographer Nick Ut.

World Press Photo cited both the documentary and new visual analysis in its decision. “The level of doubt is too significant to maintain the existing attribution,” said Joumana El Zein Khoury, the foundation’s executive director.

Nick Ut, who won a Pulitzer in 1973 for the photo, strongly denies the claims. His attorney, Jim Hornstein, criticized the move, calling it “de-



plorable and unprofessional.”

The AP also weighed in, releasing a 96-page report that includes interviews, technical studies, and photo forensics. While the report found no definitive evidence to change the attribution, it acknowledged that gaps in information prevent a conclusive determination.

A third photographer, military photojournalist Huynh Cong Phuc, is also mentioned as a possible author.

The Pulitzer Prize Board stated it has no plans to revisit Ut’s award, emphasizing that authorship is determined by submitting news organizations — in this case, the AP.

For now, World Press Photo’s suspension of credit remains in effect unless further evidence emerges to clearly confirm or refute the original attribution.

# Viral Video Shows A Day in the Life of a Matcha Farmer in Japan, Wins Hearts Online

Matcha has become a global sensation, appearing in everything from lattes and smoothies to cakes and skin-care. But behind the vibrant green powder lies a meticulous and labor-intensive farming process that few have seen—until now.

A heartwarming reel shared by Instagram user Max (@matchabae) offers a rare glimpse into the daily life of a matcha farmer in Japan. The video has gone viral, garnering widespread appreciation for its simplicity, authenticity, and the effort it showcases behind the matcha we so often enjoy.

The video begins at 6:30 am, as Max starts his day. After slipping on his footwear, he heads into the kitchen with his laptop and prepares breakfast around 7 am. His morning meal is wholesome and modest, featuring a bowl of yoghurt with cereal, banana, and a few additional ingredients—a nourishing start before a long day on the farm.

By 8 am, Max is on the move. He loads his truck with large black mats—special coverings used to shade the tea plants. This shading process is crucial in matcha farming, as it increases chlorophyll production and enhances the flavor of the leaves.

Once at the farm, the reel shows Max and fellow workers carefully rolling out the coverings



over rows of lush green tea plants. The process is surprisingly detailed. Battling strong winds that keep lifting the mats, Max remarks, “The wind has been so insane. They keep getting pulled up.” He demonstrates how the coverings must be tied “three times around the branches” to hold them securely in place.

The serene visuals of the farm, combined with Max’s calm narration and dedication, have captivated viewers worldwide. The reel offers a touching reminder of the craftsmanship and care that go into producing even the simplest ingredients in our daily lives.

Social media users have flooded the comments with praise, expressing newfound respect for matcha farmers and gratitude for this intimate look at their world. The video is a quiet tribute to slow living, hard work, and nature’s rhythm—one that continues to resonate with thousands.

# Is AI Overhyped? New Study Shows Little Impact on Jobs and Wages

Despite the global hype surrounding artificial intelligence (AI), a new study suggests its real-world impact on jobs and wages may be far more modest than expected. As fears grow over AI replacing human workers and reshaping entire industries, early research now paints a different picture.

A working paper from the National Bureau of Economic Research in Denmark has found that AI’s effect on the labour market is minimal so far. The study analyzed data from 25,000 workers across 7,000 workplaces—primarily in occupations considered highly vulnerable to AI disruption, such as accountants, customer service representatives, financial advisors, HR professionals, software de-



velopers, and teachers.

The researchers, economists Anders Humlum and Emilie Vester-

gaard, reported that AI usage led to only a three percent reduction in work hours, with productivity gains translating into just a three to seven

percent increase in pay. “AI chatbots have had no significant impact on earnings or recorded hours in any occupation,” they wrote.

This evidence runs counter to the dominant narrative of AI driving massive workplace transformation or triggering job losses on a wide scale. “While adoption has been rapid, with firms heavily invested in unlocking technological potential, the economic impacts remain small,” the paper notes.

The authors argue that while companies may be eager to embrace AI for cost-cutting and efficiency, the actual benefits in terms of productivity and wage growth have been underwhelming. “Modest productiv-

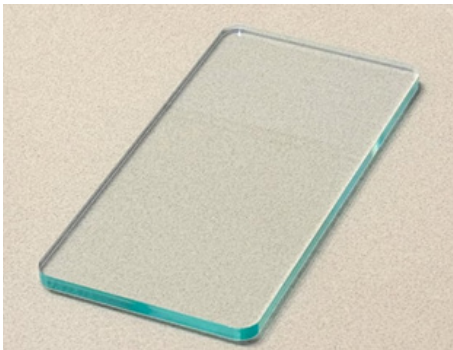
ity gains, combined with weak wage pass-through, help explain the limited labor market effects,” they added.

The findings challenge corporate strategies currently underway. For instance, cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike recently laid off five percent of its staff, citing AI integration as the reason. Similarly, Duolingo announced it would phase out contractors in favor of AI tools, echoing a shift it made in 2012 when it transitioned fully to mobile.

As businesses bet big on AI, this study serves as a sobering reminder that the technology’s economic impact—at least for now—might not be as revolutionary as many expected.

# No Apps, No Notifications: US Startup’s ‘Fake’ Phone Goes Viral as a Cure for Screen Addiction

In an age where digital overload is increasingly linked to anxiety and reduced attention spans, a US-based startup has taken an unconventional approach to tackle phone addiction — by creating a phone that doesn’t actually do anything.



Enter the Methaphone, a minimalist, screenless device designed to replicate the shape, weight, and feel of a smartphone, but with zero functionality. Priced at just \$20, this “fake” phone features a smooth, transparent acrylic surface, allowing users to mimic the scrolling motion so familiar in daily life—without accessing any content or notifications.

The Methaphone gained widespread attention after a TikTok video went viral, showing a woman scrolling on what appeared to be a futuristic transparent phone. Speculation erupted online, with some users calling it a new “Nokia glass phone.” It was later revealed that the object was actually a Methaphone — a psychological tool aimed at helping people break their compulsive phone habits.

Made from durable clear acrylic, the Methaphone is shaped like a modern smartphone and offers a tactile experience that mirrors

the feel of real devices. It’s designed for people who often reach for their phones out of habit or boredom, rather than necessity.

“When the urge strikes to pick up your phone and scroll aimlessly, the Methaphone offers a similar physical sensation without the distraction,” the company said in a statement. “It’s a way to become conscious of your screen time without going cold turkey.”

The idea is based on the principle of substitution therapy—redirecting habitual behavior to a non-disruptive alternative. By replacing real phones with Methaphones during moments of mindless scrolling, users can become more aware of their digital consumption and begin reducing it gradually.

The product has sparked a mix of curiosity, praise, and skepticism online. While some call it a clever mental health tool, others view it as a commentary on how deeply ingrained our tech habits have become.

Still, in a world where constant connectivity is the norm, the Methaphone offers a refreshingly low-tech response — no apps, no alerts, just mindful mimicry.

# FaceAge: The AI Tool That Measures Your Health from a Selfie

A groundbreaking AI tool called FaceAge is making waves in the medical community by promising to assess a person’s health simply from a photograph. Developed by researchers at Mass General Brigham, a leading nonprofit healthcare system based in Boston, FaceAge uses deep learning algorithms to analyze facial features and predict a patient’s “biological health age” rather than just their chronological age.

FaceAge is inspired by the traditional “eyeball test” used by physicians—an intuitive, quick judgment about a patient’s health based on appearance. However, while human doctors might rely on subjective experience, FaceAge uses large datasets and AI to deliver a more standardized, objective measurement. According to the research team, this system evaluates visible facial cues such as skin texture, muscle tone, and other subtle features to estimate how “aged” a person appears in terms of overall health.

The goal is not to tell you how many birthdays you’ve had, but rather how your body is aging biologically. This distinction matters: two people aged 50 chronologically might differ significantly in biological age depending on factors like lifestyle, disease, and genetics. A person with a biological age of 60 may be at higher health risk than someone whose biological age is closer to 40.

Published in The Lancet Digital Health on May



8, 2025, the study highlights how FaceAge could help doctors make faster, data-driven decisions, especially in emergency and critical care settings. Early results suggest that FaceAge’s assessments correlate with health outcomes and mortality risk more accurately than some traditional methods.

That said, the researchers caution that FaceAge is still in the experimental phase and not ready for clinical deployment. More testing across diverse populations and environments is needed before it can become a trusted tool in hospitals or clinics.

Still, the potential is immense. In a future shaped by AI, FaceAge could help personalize treatments, monitor aging, and even catch health issues before symptoms appear—all from a single selfie.



# Mumbai Indians Sign Three Replacements Ahead of IPL 2025 Playoffs

Mumbai Indians have announced the signing of three new players ahead of the IPL 2025 playoffs, replacing key overseas names who are returning for national duties. Among the incoming players is Sri Lankan captain Charith Asalanka, who has reportedly secured a hefty ₹5.25 crore deal — a significant amount for a mid-season replacement. The franchise confirmed the arrivals of Asalanka, England pacer Richard Gleeson, and seasoned English batter Jonny Bairstow. These signings are necessitated by the departure of South Africa's Ryan Rickelton and Corbin Bosch, along with England's Will Jacks. All three will be leaving the IPL due to international commitments ahead of the playoffs.

Will Jacks, who briefly returned to India to play MI's final group-stage matches, will now head back to England for their home ODI series against the West Indies, starting May 29. This international duty overlaps with the IPL's playoff schedule, rendering him unavailable for the remainder of the tournament.

Meanwhile, Ryan Rickelton and Corbin Bosch have been called up by Cricket South Africa in preparation for the World Test Championship final. As per ESPNcricinfo, they are required to report back by May 27, which means their IPL campaign is effectively over.

Charith Asalanka, currently leading Sri Lanka, brings leadership and all-round capabilities, making him a valuable addition during the crucial knockout stages. His signing fee



reflects Mumbai Indians' urgency to bolster their middle order with a reliable overseas performer.

Richard Gleeson, known for his sharp pace and death-over skills, adds depth to the bowling attack in the absence of Bosch. Jonny Bairstow's inclusion brings top-order experience and explosive batting prowess. Having played 50 IPL matches with stints at Punjab Kings (2022, 2024) and Sunrisers Hyderabad (2019–2021), Bairstow adds both experience and firepower to the Mumbai lineup.

With these timely reinforcements, Mumbai Indians are looking to strengthen their campaign as they gear up for the high-pressure playoff encounters, aiming to secure another IPL title in their storied history.

# Thailand, Nepal Qualify for ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 Global Qualifier

Thailand and Nepal have officially booked their places in the Global Qualifier for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026, following strong performances in the Asia Regional Qualifier's Super Three stage. Alongside the UAE, both teams competed in a round-robin format, with the top two sides earning spots in the next round of qualification.

Nepal sealed their progression on Monday with a nail-biting five-wicket win over the UAE in Bangkok. Chasing 115, Nepal paced their innings carefully, reaching the target in the final over. Key contributions came from skipper Indu Barma (30) and Rubina Chhetry (23), while Manisha Upadhyay impressed with the ball, claiming 4/20 to restrict the UAE to 114/7 in 20 overs.



Nepal's disciplined bowling attack never allowed the UAE to build momentum, despite a steady 39 from opener Esha Oza. Tight fielding and consistent pressure meant the Emirati side fell short of a defendable total on a decent batting surface.

Thailand, on the other hand, had already confirmed their spot with a dominant victory over the UAE in an earlier Super Three clash. Led by Naru-mol Chaiwai, Thailand posted 144/5 thanks to a dynamic 46\* off just 20 balls by Natthakan Chantham and a steady 49 from Nattaya Boochatham. The UAE faltered in their chase after the early loss of Oza and finished at 90/5, never truly threatening the target.

With one Super Three fixture remaining—Thailand vs Nepal—both teams are now uncatchable at the top of the standings, confirming their advancement.

Thailand and Nepal will join Bangladesh, Scotland, and the USA at the Global Qualifier. Bangladesh and Scotland earned automatic entries due to their participation in the last ICC Women's T20 World Cup, while the USA secured their place through the Americas Qualifier held in Argentina in March.

Additional teams will qualify via the upcoming Europe and Africa regional tournaments, each offering two spots. One final team will qualify through the East Asia-Pacific region.

The Global Qualifier will determine the final four spots for the 2026 ICC Women's T20 World Cup in England and Wales, joining the already qualified Australia, India, New Zealand, South Africa, West Indies, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and host nation England.

# Kidambi Srikanth Enters Main Draw of Malaysia Masters, Other Indians Fall in Qualifiers

Veteran Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth advanced to the main draw of the Malaysia Masters Super 500 tournament with two convincing wins in the qualification rounds on Tuesday. However, it was a disappointing day overall for Indian badminton, as none of the other singles or doubles players managed to progress beyond the qualifiers. Srikanth, a silver medallist at the 2021 World Championships and former world No. 1, showed signs of a strong comeback. After a slow start in his second qualifying match, he bounced back impressively to defeat Huang Yu Kai of Chinese Taipei 9-21, 21-12, 21-6. Earlier in the day, the 32-year-old had made light work of another Taipei shuttler, Kuo Kuan Lin, winning 21-8, 21-13 in straight games. Srikanth will now face a tough test in the main draw as he goes up against sixth-seeded Chinese player Lu Guang Zu in the opening round. Lu is known for his aggressive style of play and has consistently been among the top-ranked Chinese singles players in recent years.



Meanwhile, the rest of the Indian contingent had a forgettable outing in the qualifying rounds. Tharun Manne-palli narrowly lost to Thailand's Panitchaphon Teeraratsakul in straight but closely contested games, 13-21, 21-23. S Sankar Muthusamy Subramanian also fought hard but went down 20-22, 20-22 to China's Zhu Xuan Chen. In women's singles, young Indian prospect Anmol Kharb, a key member of India's historic Asian Team gold medal-winning squad last year, failed to advance as she lost 14-21, 18-21 to Hung Yi-Ting of Chinese Taipei. The mixed doubles pair of Mohit Jaglan and Lakshita Jaglan were also unable to make it past the qualifiers, falling 15-21, 16-21 to the Malaysian duo of Ming Yap Too and Lee Yu Shan. Top Indian stars PV Sindhu and HS Prannoy are scheduled to begin their campaigns in the main draw of the \$475,000 tournament on Wednesday, with hopes resting on their performances to bring glory for India in Kuala Lumpur.

# India's Star Javelin Thrower At Olympics Fails Dope Test, May Be Banned

Indian javelin thrower Shivpal Singh, who represented the country at the Tokyo Olympics, has once again found himself embroiled in a doping scandal. Sources have revealed that Shivpal has been provisionally suspended after traces of methandienone, a banned anabolic steroid, were found in his sample during an out-of-competition test conducted earlier this year. Shivpal, who hails from Uttar Pradesh, was training at the National Centre of Excellence in Patiala under the guidance of India's javelin coach Sergey Makarov when the test was conducted. Following the test, he notably did not participate in the National Federation Senior Athletics Championships held in Kochi in April, raising early questions about his absence. This is not Shivpal's first brush with anti-doping regulations. In October 2021, the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) suspended him for four years after methandienone was detected in his sample. However, in January 2023, the ban was reduced to one year following a successful appeal



by his legal representative, Parth Goswami. The appeal was based on Shivpal's claim that the positive result stemmed from a contaminated supplement, the name of which he had disclosed during the doping

control process. Despite having already served a suspension, this latest development places the 28-year-old athlete in serious jeopardy. Under current anti-doping rules, a second offence carries a much harsher penalty—Shivpal could now face an eight-year ban if found guilty. That outcome could effectively end his professional athletics career. Shivpal's case is particularly disheartening given his position as one of India's few Olympic-level javelin throwers. At the Tokyo Games, he finished 27th in the qualifying round. Though he has never reached the heights of Neeraj Chopra, India's Olympic gold medallist, Shivpal was seen as a strong national contender in the sport. The recurrence of methandienone in his samples raises significant concerns about either negligence or intent, both of which will be closely examined by NADA during the ongoing investigation. As of now, Shivpal awaits a final ruling, and the future of his athletic career hangs in the balance.

# Rajasthan Royals Crush CSK as 14-Year-Old Suryavanshi Steals the Show

In a match that could go down as a turning point in IPL history, 14-year-old prodigy Vaibhav Suryavanshi delivered a stunning half-century to guide Rajasthan Royals (RR) to a six-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in their IPL 2025 encounter. The win not only boosts RR's playoff hopes but also all but confirms CSK's place at the bottom of the table for the first time in the tournament's storied history. After being asked to bat first, CSK posted a competitive total of 187/8 in their 20 overs. The innings was anchored by strong contributions from Ayush Mah-tre and Dewald Brevis, both scoring gritty forties to give Chennai momentum through the middle overs. However, the rest of the batting lineup struggled to capitalize, as RR's disciplined bowling attack struck regularly to prevent CSK from crossing the 200-run mark. Rajasthan's reply began steadily with Ya-shasvi Jaiswal getting the team off to a



solid start. But the real highlight of the chase came when the teenage sensation Vaibhav Suryavanshi walked to the crease. Displaying composure beyond his years, Suryavanshi played a mature

and fearless knock, combining classical strokes with innovative shot-making to keep the scoreboard ticking. He found a reliable partner in skipper Sanju Samson, and together they forged a crucial 98-run partnership that turned the tide of the match. Once Suryavanshi departed after his memorable half-century, the finishing duties were taken over by Dhruv Jurel, who calmly sealed the chase with sharp running and well-placed boundaries in the final overs. The win not only reaffirms Rajasthan Royals' reputation for nurturing young talent but also serves as a sobering moment for Chennai Super Kings, who now face the prospect of finishing at the bottom of the IPL standings for the first time in their history. As for Suryavanshi, his performance has already ignited comparisons with past greats, and the cricketing world will be watching closely to see what this young star does next.



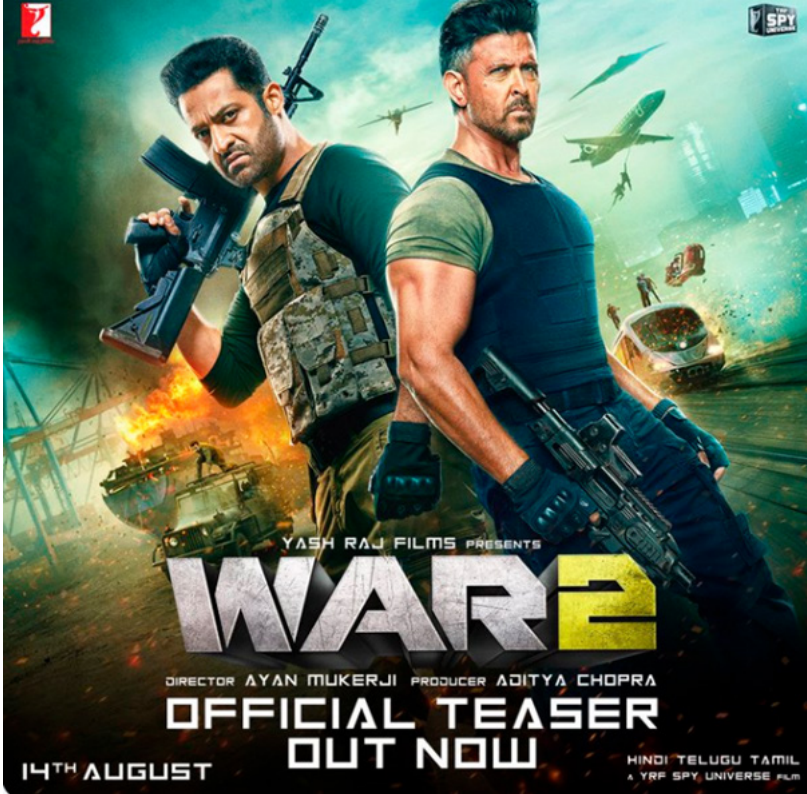


## War 2 Teaser: Hrithik Roshan and Jr NTR Set the Screen Ablaze in This Explosive Action Promo

The teaser for War 2, one of the most awaited action thrillers of 2025, is finally out, and it lives up to the massive hype. Directed by Ayan Mukerji and produced by Yash Raj Films, War 2 is a pivotal addition to the YRF Spy Universe. The film also marks Telugu superstar Jr NTR's much-anticipated debut in Bollywood, starring alongside Hrithik Roshan, who reprises his role as Agent Kabir. The teaser was unveiled today, coinciding with NTR's birthday, much to the delight of his fans.

The teaser kicks off with a gripping voiceover by NTR: "Kabir was RAW's best agent... But not anymore." This bold declaration immediately sets the tone for the power-packed showdown between the two leads. We are quickly thrown into high-octane visuals of action sequences, face-offs, and an electric clash of egos and strength. The chemistry between Hrithik and NTR crackles onscreen, promising an intense rivalry and dynamic performances.

Kiara Advani, who plays the female lead, appears briefly but leaves a mark with her glamorous presence. Her role seems poised to add both style and intrigue to the narrative. While the background score may not be as thunderous as those in South Indian teasers, it complements the visuals effectively. The cinematography is slick and stylish, capturing exotic locations and tightly choreographed stunts



that define the YRF action template.

War 2 seems to tick all the right boxes for a blockbuster: a star-studded cast, intense action, global locations, dazzling visuals, and pulsating dance numbers. With its mix of commercial ingredients and patriotic undertones, the film aims squarely at mass appeal across India.

With music by Pritam and a pan-India release planned in Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil, War 2 is slated to hit theatres worldwide on August 14, 2025—just in time for the Independence Day weekend. If the teaser is anything to go by, fans are in for a thrilling cinematic ride.

## ‘Anaganaga’ Wins Hearts and Crosses 100 Million Streaming Minutes on ETV Win

In just five days since its premiere, Anaganaga has emerged as a breakout success on OTT, capturing audiences' hearts and clocking over 100 million streaming minutes on ETV Win. The emotional drama, headlined by Sumanth, has been widely praised for its sincerity, grounded storytelling, and relatable themes — quickly becoming a fan-favourite across age groups.

Directed by Sunny Sanjay, Anaganaga avoids the usual OTT spectacle in favour of a more intimate, character-driven narrative. It tells a heartfelt story that resonates deeply with viewers, thanks to its emotional core and restrained execution. The absence of over-the-top sequences and the film's focus on raw human emotion have made it stand out in a crowded digital space.

Sumanth's mature performance has earned him considerable appreciation, with many calling it one of his best in recent years. The film also features impressive performances from Kajal Chowdhary, Master Viharsh, Avasara Srinivas, Anu Hasan, and Rakesh Rachakonda. Each actor brings authenticity and emotional depth to their roles, adding richness to the film's narrative.

What's also notable is the growing celebrity support for Anaganaga, with several prominent voices from the Telugu film industry praising the film on social media. Many have called it one of the most genuine and touching films they've watched recently, further amplifying its visibility and reach.

Produced by Rakesh Reddy Gadam and Rudra Madireddy, the film benefits from a tight script and thoughtful direction. The music,



composed by Chandu Ravi, blends seamlessly with the storytelling, enhancing the film's emotional impact without overshadowing it.

The 100 million streaming minutes milestone reflects not only the film's wide appeal but also the growing demand for quality, content-driven regional cinema on OTT platforms. As Anaganaga continues to gain momentum, it's clear that audiences are responding strongly to stories rooted in emotion, simplicity, and truth.

With this success, Anaganaga firmly establishes itself as one of the most impactful Telugu OTT releases of the year so far.

## ‘NTRNeel’: A Storm in the Making, Makers Unveil Special Birthday Poster

As Tollywood superstar Jr NTR celebrates his birthday today, the makers of his upcoming pan-India action spectacle, tentatively titled NTRNeel, stirred excitement by unveiling a special birthday poster. The film, directed by action maestro Prashanth Neel and produced by Mythri Movie Makers, promises to be one of the most explosive cinematic events of 2026.

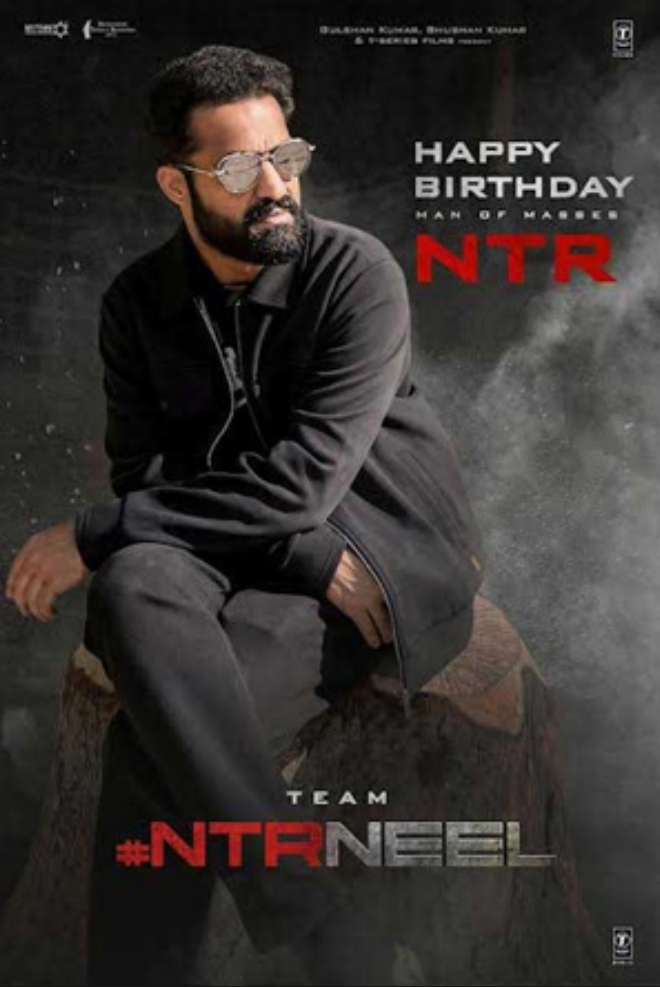
Marking the occasion, the team shared a striking poster on social media, featuring NTR in a lean and athletic avatar, dressed in a sleek black tracksuit. His intense look, combined with the rugged backdrop, exudes raw energy and unrelenting power. The caption accompanying the poster read: "A mass missile that's always hungry to hunt. NTRNeel is built to worship every moment of this storm." This power-packed statement perfectly captures the film's tone and the persona NTR is set to embody.

While fans were eagerly awaiting a first glimpse or teaser from the film, the makers respectfully postponed its release to allow the spotlight to remain on the War 2 teaser, which also features NTR. However, the birthday poster alone has been enough to set social media buzzing, with fans praising NTR's fierce new look and the film's intense vibe.

NTRNeel recently concluded an important shooting schedule near Mangalore, Karnataka, with high-octane sequences reportedly

filmed during this phase. The film is being crafted as a large-scale action thriller, with Prashanth Neel—known for KGF and Salaar—bringing his signature visual grandeur and gritty storytelling to the table.

Backed by the prestigious Mythri Movie Makers, NTRNeel is shaping up to be a pan-India release, target-



ing a massive theatrical rollout on June 25, 2026. The project is one of the most anticipated in Indian cinema, not just because of the director-actor collaboration but also due to its scale and vision.

As fans continue to celebrate NTR's birthday, the NTRNeel poster has only added fuel to the anticipation, promising a cinematic storm that's just beginning to brew.

## Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning

Tom Cruise Wore '125 Pound' Diving Suit For Underwater Sequence

Hollywood icon Tom Cruise has long been celebrated for performing his own death-defying stunts, but for the final chapter of the Mission: Impossible franchise, the actor has taken his physical commitment to a whole new level. As Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning marks the end of the high-octane series, Cruise went all-in to ensure the film delivers a fitting finale. According to a report by Variety, one of the movie's standout action sequences required Cruise to wear a specially designed diving suit that weighed a staggering 125 pounds. The intense underwater scene reportedly pushed the actor to his physical and mental limits. Known for always preferring practical effects over CGI, Cruise trained



extensively for the sequence, focusing on breath control, mobility, and strength conditioning. The heavy suit, designed for deep-sea dives and customized for the film's needs, made movement incredibly difficult, further elevating the danger and complexity of the shoot. "Tom thrives on challenges, and he wanted this scene to be as authentic and thrilling as possible," a crew member

told Variety. "Wearing that suit and performing underwater stunts required a level of discipline and physicality that only a few actors could pull off." This isn't the first time Cruise has pushed boundaries for the Mission: Impossible franchise. Over the years, he's famously clung to the side of a flying plane, scaled the Burj Khalifa, performed high-speed motor-

cycle chases, and completed over 500 skydives — all in the name of cinematic realism.

The Final Reckoning, directed by long-time collaborator Christopher McQuarrie, is expected to be a massive conclusion to the beloved action series. The film will reportedly tie together major storylines and deliver some of the most ambitious stunts yet seen in the franchise.

While plot details are tightly under wraps, Cruise's latest stunt is just one of many reasons fans are eagerly awaiting the film's release. With each installment, the Mission: Impossible series has redefined action cinema — and it seems the final mission will be no exception.

## ‘OMG 3’: Akshay and Director Amit Rai Brainstorm Ideas for Next Installment

Film Likely to Roll in 2026

Fans of the popular OMG (Oh My God) franchise have reason to be excited, as actor Akshay Kumar and director Amit Rai are currently developing ideas for the highly anticipated third installment, OMG 3. Following the success of the previous two films, the creative duo is now deep into discussions to shape the next chapter of the satirical drama series. According to sources close to the project, director Amit Rai recently accompanied Akshay Kumar during the shoot of Bhoot Bangla, a horror-comedy directed by Priyadarshan and filmed in Kerala. The shoot also featured actress Wamiqa Gabbi, and a song from the film was completed over three days in scenic locations across the state.

While in Kerala, Amit Rai and Akshay Kumar took time to brainstorm multiple concepts for OMG 3. A source told Pinkvilla, "Amit had sev-



eral storylines in mind for the third part of OMG, and he presented them to Akshay during their time together. They explored different narrative directions and discussed which themes could resonate most with the audience."

The OMG franchise is known for tackling socially relevant issues with a satirical twist. The original OMG:

Oh My God! (2012) focused on blind faith and religious dogma, while OMG 2 (2023) addressed sex education and societal taboos in a bold yet sensitive manner. With both films striking a chord with audiences and critics alike, expectations for the third installment are high.

"The jamming session between Akshay and Amit went really well," the source added. "The next step is for Amit Rai to finalize a compelling script. Once the narrative is locked in, the project is expected to go on floors in the latter half of 2026."

While official details about the plot or cast are yet to be revealed, fans can rest assured that OMG 3 is in active development, with Akshay Kumar and Amit Rai determined to deliver another thought-provoking cinematic experience.