



HC Stays Local Body Polls; Congress Faces Major Setback Over BC Quota



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th — The Telangana High Court delivered a significant setback to the Congress government by issuing a temporary stay on the entire local body election process. The stay was granted in response to multiple petitions challenging the government's decision to increase the Backward Classes (BC) reservation from 23% to an unprecedented 42% via Government Order (GO) No. 9, issued on September 26.

The stay order was passed by a division bench comprising Chief Justice Aparesh Kumar Singh and Justice G. M. Mohiuddin, who took strong note of the petitioners' arguments. The core legal challenge revolves around the fact that raising the BC quota to 42% (in addition to existing SC/ST reservations) pushes the overall reservation percentage far beyond the 50% ceiling mandated by the Supreme Court. Petitioners

argued that the Congress government failed to follow the proper legal procedure—specifically, demonstrating robust empirical data to justify such a substantial increase and addressing the need for a Constitutional amendment to breach the 50% limit. The court's action temporarily halts the election schedule, officially announced in a notification released on September 29 for polls to be conducted in five phases.

The bench directed the state government to submit a detailed counter-affidavit explaining the legal basis and procedure followed for the reservation increase within four weeks. Following the submission, petitioners have an additional two weeks to file their replies. The interim stay is expected to remain operational until the court resumes hearing the case in six weeks, effectively

putting the entire local body election process on hold. The decision severely impacts the Congress government's political agenda, which hinged on the 42% reservation promise to secure BC support ahead of crucial local polls. The stay underscores the judicial scrutiny applied when state governments attempt to bypass constitutional limits on reservation policy.



Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka Hits Out at BRS, BJP on BC Quota Controversy

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th — Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, speaking at Gandhi Bhavan, strongly refuted allegations made by the BRS and BJP regarding the ongoing legal challenges to BC reservations in local body elections.

He directly criticized the previous BRS government, noting that in 2018, it enacted a law capping the reservation cut-off at 50%, preventing an enhanced quota. "The BRS made no genuine effort to provide reservations for OBCs," he said.

the Telangana Legislative Assembly, is pending with the Governor. He challenged the BJP: "Who stopped the bill unanimously passed by the Telangana Legislative Assembly? Isn't it the BJP government?" accusing both parties of political collusion and obstruction.

Vikramarka confirmed that the High Court had mandated the government to conduct elections by September 30, 2025, and asserted that the Congress government made a sincere effort to ensure 42% reservation for BCs before proceeding with the polls.

Vikramarka highlighted that the Congress government conducted the SEEC survey (Socio-Economic and Educational Survey) to provide empirical data supporting GO 9. He also pointed out that the BC reservation bill, unanimously approved by

The Deputy CM emphasized that if the Governor does not act on a bill within three months, it is deemed law, which justified the issuance of GO 9. He vowed to fight for the 42% reservation both in courts and politically.

KTR Blasts Congress Over BC Quota; Criticizes BJP for Complicity



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th — BRS Working President K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) launched a scathing attack on the Congress government following the High Court's stay on the 42% BC reservation increase, branding the process as a political betrayal against the Backward Classes. KTR claimed that the court's judgment exposed Congress's "legally untenable" tactics, designed to mislead voters. He accused Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and Congress of political gamesman-

ship, using the 42% reservation promise solely to buy time. KTR also criticized BJP at the Centre, holding them responsible for failing to resolve pending BC bills. "Congress betrayed BCs in Telangana; BJP betrayed them in Delhi," he said, adding that political infighting has paralyzed village-level governance. He warned that the people of Telangana, misled by a fake GO and unfulfilled promises, would deliver a strong verdict against the Revanth Reddy government.

CM Revanth Reddy Seeks US Partnership; Advocates Favorable Policies



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th — Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy met with a 16-member US delegation, led by representatives from the Hudson Institute, to advocate for policies strengthening India-US ties.

He raised concerns over rising US tariffs and strict H-1B visa regulations, emphasizing that mutually beneficial policies would promote economic growth and global stability.

Reddy presented his "Telangana Rising" vision, highlighting Hyderabad as a global investment hub, and detailed projects including Bharat Future City, Regional Ring Road and Rail, manufacturing

zones, dry ports, and high-capacity connectivity to Machilipatnam Port. Plans for bullet train connectivity and Musi River rejuvenation were also discussed.

He formally invited US

industries to invest in Bharat Future City, aiming for participation from all Fortune 500 companies. IT Minister Sridhar Babu added plans for an AI City and Artificial Intelligence University to establish

Telangana as the nation's skill capital.

The US delegation included Wall Street Journal columnist Professor Walter Russell Mead and CEO Mark Rosenblatt.

Telangana to Procure Maize at MSP; Criticizes Centre for Inaction

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –

Agriculture Minister Thummala Nageswara Rao announced a major intervention to protect Telangana’s farmers, revealing that the state government, under the Chief Minister’s directive, will procure the maize crop at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) of ₹2,400 per quintal through Markfed. This decision comes in the wake of the Central government’s failure to initiate procurement despite announcing the MSP, which resulted in open market prices plunging ₹441 below the guaranteed rate, hitting farmers’ incomes hard. The state plans to procure a substantial 8.66 lakh metric tonnes of maize, at an estimated cost of around ₹2,400 crore, a burden it is undertaking solely for the

welfare of farmers. Rao also issued a pointed challenge to the Centre, demanding the immediate removal of the 25% ceiling imposed under the Price Support Scheme (PSS) for pulses and other crops, which restricts states from buying the entire harvest at MSP. He argued that such limitations render the Central support scheme ineffective and called for logistical and financial cooperation to ensure fair prices for farmers. Highlighting last year’s jowar procurement experience, the Minister urged farmers to utilize the newly established Markfed procurement centers rather than selling their produce at low rates to private traders, safeguarding their financial stability for the season.

EOI for Kaleshwaram Rehabilitation Designs; Minister Prefers IIT Partner



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –

The Telangana Irrigation Department has invited Expressions of Interest (EOI) for preparing rehabilitation and restoration designs for the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP) barages, including Medigadda, Annaram, and Sundilla, with submissions due by October 15. Irrigation Minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy expressed a preference for a premier IIT partner to collaborate with the Chief Design Organisation (CDO), ensuring the highest level of technical expertise and independent review for the complex and politically sensitive restoration work.

He clarified that the rehabilitation designs would strictly follow the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA) report, which had previously flagged significant design and structural flaws. The Minister confirmed that pre-monsoon structural tests have been completed, with post-monsoon verification scheduled shortly. Reddy also set a non-negotiable target of one year for completing the full restoration designs, underscoring the government’s commitment to technical transparency, institutional accountability, and safety in addressing the structural issues at KLIP.

KTR at GCC Summit: Hyderabad Rising, Urges Govt to Sustain Growth

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –

BRS working president K. T. Rama Rao (KTR) addressed the GCC Summit, declaring that Hyderabad is rapidly emerging as India’s leading hub for Global Capability Centres (GCCs) and is poised to surpass Bengaluru as the nation’s premier tech and business destination. KTR attributed the city’s transformation to strategic planning, stable policies, and institutional reforms implemented over the past decade, emphasizing that Hyderabad’s rise is based on robust systems rather than the actions of individuals. Speaking to the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI), he highlighted the critical

role of financial professionals in building investor confidence and ensuring disciplined financial management, which is vital for attracting global capital to sectors such as IT, banking, and life sciences. While recognizing the efforts of the current government, KTR urged it to maintain policy continuity and avoid administrative changes that could undermine Hyderabad’s competitive edge. He positioned the BRS as a vigilant opposition, committed to supporting positive measures, safeguarding infrastructure development, and fostering human capital investment—all crucial for sustaining the GCC sector’s projected growth.

CM Revanth Reddy Unveils Telangana Horticulture Development Plan 2035



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy unveiled the ‘Telangana State Horticulture Development Plan-2035,’ a comprehensive and forward-looking strategy developed by the Sri Konda Laxman Telangana State Horticultural University to transform horticulture across the state over the next decade. The plan sets ambitious targets, aiming to expand fruit cultivation by 1.32 lakh acres and vegetable cultivation by 2.45 lakh acres by 2030, with a projected four-fold return on investment for Telangana’s farmers. It envisions a holistic transformation of the sector, moving it from traditional farming to a technologically advanced, market-linked, and export-oriented industry. Under the plan, the government will focus on identifying suitable districts for specific crops and improving productivity through the adoption of University-developed technologies and the establishment of Custom Hiring Centres in every Mandal. Post-harvest management will receive a major boost with state-of-the-art cold storage facilities, integrated pack houses for quality grading and export standards, and dedicated research for value addition. The strategy also emphasizes market empowerment, promoting collective trading through Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and the creation of a Market Intelligence Centre at the University to provide timely price forecasts. The plan sets the stage for year-round availability of vegetables and a future where Telangana’s horticulture sector is globally competitive, highly productive, and commercially rewarding for its farmers.

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar on BC Quota Stay: Announces Future Legal Action

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –

Minister Ponnam Prabhakar responded firmly to the High Court’s temporary stay on the 42% BC reservation, asserting the Congress government’s unwavering commitment to social justice. He stated that the government’s next legal course of action will be finalized only after a careful review of the court’s order, emphasizing that all steps taken so far were fully compliant with Supreme Court guidelines. Prabhakar highlighted the meticulous process undertaken by the government, which included conducting a full-scale caste survey to gather empirical data, setting up a Dedicated Commission, obtaining Cabinet approval, and passing the Legislative Assembly Act. “The Congress has always been the champion of social justice for the BC community,” he said, reiterating the party’s commitment to the 42% quota. Taking a sharp political stance, the Minister questioned the BRS and BJP for failing to formally join the case (“implead”) in the High Court, despite previously supporting similar legislative measures. He added that this inaction undermines the credibility of their earlier claims and weakens the state’s position in defending the quota. Prabhakar also underlined the practical consequences of the delay in local body elections, warning that it is causing Telangana to lose crucial Central funds. He urged all political parties to rise above partisan politics and unite in court to safeguard the rights of backward classes, while clarifying that the government issued the GO only because the Assembly Bill was awaiting the Governor’s assent.



Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka Pushes Solar Power Agenda; Meets German Delegation



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, who also manages the Energy portfolio, met with a delegation from Germany to discuss ways to strengthen Telangana’s renewable energy sector. The Deputy CM reiterated the state government’s commitment to solar power development as part of its broader strategy to enhance the electricity supply, promote green energy, and ensure sustainable growth for both urban and rural consumers. During the meeting, Bhatti proposed an innovative “prosumer” model, in which farmers and domestic consumers could generate solar power and sell surplus energy back to the grid, providing them with a reliable additional income stream. He emphasized that such models should integrate seamlessly with existing welfare programs, such as free electricity for 29 lakh agricultural pump sets and beneficiaries under the Gruha Jyothi scheme, while also contributing to Telangana’s goal of energy self-sufficiency. The Deputy CM instructed Energy Department Principal Secretary Naveen Mittal to study German solar technologies, business models, and solutions for potential economic and technical adoption in Telangana. Bhatti said the initiative aims to establish a sustainable power ecosystem, leverage advanced decentralized solar solutions, and accelerate the state’s transition to clean energy under the Telangana Clean and Green Energy Policy-2025.

Jubilee Hills Bypoll: Congress Candidate Selection Sparks Factional Tensions

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— The Congress party’s official announcement of Naveen Yadav as its candidate for the Jubilee Hills by-election has immediately triggered significant internal dissent and factional tension among senior Telangana leaders. Party insiders criticized the decision for overlooking the seniority and contributions of other prominent aspirants, including former MP

Anjan Kumar Yadav and former Mayor Bonthu Rammohan, who were also recommended for the ticket. The party stated that the choice was aimed at fielding a BC candidate for a seat with a large BC voter base (approximately 1.40 lakh), aligning with Congress’s commitment to BC political empowerment. Naveen Yadav, who had previously contested the seat and secured a notable vote share, reportedly

topped multiple internal survey reports, indicating a strong winning probability for the crucial November 11 bypoll. Despite this strategic rationale combining winnability and social justice signaling, the exclusion of long-standing leaders has deepened internal fissures, raising concerns over unity and coordinated efforts necessary for a victory in this high-stakes by-election.

Congress & BJP Colluded, MLA Vemula Prashanth Reddy on BC Reservations



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— BRS MLA and former Minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy launched a sharp attack on the ruling Congress and the BJP, accusing both parties of a deliberate conspiracy to deny BCs increased reservations. Reddy termed the Congress’s issuance of the 42% BC reservation G.O. as “hypocritical politics” and a “drama” designed to mislead the BC community. He alleged that the G.O. was intentionally crafted to breach the Supreme Court’s 50% reservation ceiling, anticipating a legal stay, thus shifting blame to the judiciary. Reddy stressed that implementing reservations beyond 50% requires a Constitutional amendment, to be included in the Ninth or Tenth Schedule. He further criticized CM Revanth Reddy for focusing on “street dramas” rather than genuinely lobbying Delhi for the constitutional amendment, as promised in the Kamareddy Declaration. Highlighting BJP’s inaction on past State Assembly resolutions, he said both national parties prioritize political gains over BC welfare. Reddy promised BRS support for any authentic struggle for quota but warned Congress that BC voters would see through manipulative tactics during the upcoming local body polls.

Resolute Fight for 42% Reservations, Says Minister Vakit Shrihari

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— Congress Minister Vakit Shrihari expressed deep disappointment over the High Court’s stay on the 42% BC reservation, calling it a “calculated move by vested interests to snatch the morsel from the mouth” of the BC community. Minister Shrihari defended the Congress government’s sincerity, stating that all empirical data was meticulously collected to legally justify the reservation increase while adhering to judicial guidelines. He condemned the stay order as “shameful” and reaffirmed the government’s unwavering commitment to the BC community, promising not to back down from the 42% reservation pledge. Shrihari also challenged opposition parties BRS and BJP to demonstrate their commitment by becoming “impleaders” in the court case supporting the government. He warned that failure to intervene would brand them historically as “betrayers of the BCs,” forcing them to choose between rhetoric and genuine action for social justice.

Former Minister Harish Rao on BC Reservation Drama: Demand for Action in Delhi



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— Former Minister Harish Rao (BRS) strongly criticized Congress’s 42% BC reservation move, calling it a “drama” and political ploy reminiscent of their six unfulfilled guarantees. Rao accused Congress of using the 42% promise to manipulate BC voters ahead of local body polls, a plan he says was blocked by the High Court due to legal flaws. He questioned Congress’s historical commitment, noting that the party, despite ruling the Centre for 55 years, never pursued this significant reservation increase. Rao also slammed CM Revanth Reddy for focusing on superficial “street politics” and issuing a “token” G.O. instead of lobbying the Centre for constitutional action. He insisted that true commitment requires Parliament to amend the Constitution, including the reservation increase in Schedule 9, safeguarding it from legal challenges. Rao demanded an immediate end to the “drama” and called for a sincere, united “battle in Delhi” for the 42% quota, reaffirming BRS’s readiness to participate in an all-party delegation questioning the Centre, but rejecting Congress’s flawed approach.

MLC Addanki Dayakar on BRS ‘Chalo Bus Bhavan’ Protest: Hypocrisy Exposed



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— Congress MLC Addanki Dayakar launched a blistering response to the BRS leadership’s ‘Chalo Bus Bhavan’ protest, dismissing it as a “drama for survival” and a political attempt to regain relevance. Dayakar accused BRS of having no moral authority to address TSRTC issues, citing their decade-long rule under KCR marked by “systematic destruction and neglect” of the corporation and repeated privatization attempts. He demanded public apologies from KCR and BRS leaders for past mismanagement, including the brutal crackdown on the 2019 RTC strike, which he emotionally linked to three employee suicides. Contrastingly, Dayakar highlighted Congress initiatives: the ‘Mahalakshmi’ scheme improving RTC profitability, and plans to introduce 2,800 Electric Vehicles (EVs) in Hyderabad within three years, phasing out diesel buses. He clarified that the minor Green Fee collected is fully funded and reimbursed by the government to establish EV charging infrastructure, demonstrating Congress’s genuine commitment to RTC employees and modernization.

EAGLE Cracks Major Ephedrine Racket: 4 Arrested, ₹72 Crore Seized

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— The Elite Action Group for Drug Law Enforcement (EAGLE) conducted a raid on a residential flat in Sai Datta Residency, Jeedimetla, Hyderabad, successfully apprehending four drug manufacturers and seizing 220 KGs of Ephedrine, with a total estimated street value of approximately ₹72 crore (₹10 crore in India, ₹70 crore internationally). The arrested individuals are: Vastavayi Shiva Ramakrishna Parama Varma (the main conspirator and flat resident, previously arrested twice by NCB), Dangeti Anil (Production Manager at PNM Life Sciences, IDA Bollaram), Musini Dorababu (Production Operator at Vignasai Laboratories), and Maddu Venkata Krishna Rao (Director of PNM Life Sciences). The fifth accused, M. Prasad (Co-Director of PNM Life Sciences), is currently absconding. Investigation revealed that Varma met Anil in December 2024 at the PNM Life Sciences factory and offered a large sum to prepare Ephedrine. Anil convinced the com-



pany owners, Venkata Krishna Rao and the absconding Prasad, to use their facility. Varma supplied the chemical formula along with ₹8 lakh in cash and raw materials (Toluene, Bromine, Acetone) for production. Anil procured additional chemicals and completed the three-stage process, yielding 220 KGs of Ephedrine, which was stored at Varma's flat. The accused sought help from Dorababu to find buyers. EAGLE, having Varma under surveillance due to his prior arrests, intercepted the conspirators at the flat. Authorities noted that Ephedrine can be easily converted into Methamphetamine, multiplying its street value tenfold. PNM Life Sciences has been seized, as the lack of proper records (Lease Deed, Board Minutes, bank transactions) indicated deep involvement in illegal production. EAGLE appealed to the public, especially youth and parents, to report drug-related concerns to their confidential helpline, calling for a united front in the mission for a "Drug-Free Telangana."

BRS Launches 'Chalo Bus Bhavan' Protest Over RTC Fare Hike; Key Leaders Detained

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— In a significant political move, the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) staged a "Chalo Bus Bhavan" protest on Thursday against the Telangana Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) fare hike. Leaders physically boarded RTC buses to oppose what they described as an "anti-poor and unjust" measure, alleging it is part of a larger plan to privatize the corporation. Anticipating the protest, a large police force was deployed from early morning, placing BRS working president K. T. Rama Rao, senior leaders like T. Harish Rao and Talasani Srin-

vas Yadav, and other key elected representatives under temporary house arrest. Though later allowed to proceed, KTR sharply criticized the police action, condemning attempts to curb democratic protests. He reaffirmed BRS's commitment to the agitation, vowing to continue efforts to pressure the government into rolling back the fare hike, which the party says disproportionately affects the common people and economically weaker sections. The protest underscores BRS's shift toward a more assertive opposition stance on populist issues.

Hyderabad Photographer Jeet Aman Wins Global Big Cats Award for Iconic Leopard Image

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— City-based wildlife photographer Jeet Aman has been recognized globally, winning a special award at the Global Big Cats Photography Competition 2025 for his striking image, "Leopard with the Full Moon." The award was presented by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Bhupendra Yadav. Aman's photograph stood out among 1,400 submissions worldwide, securing sixth position among the top eight selected by the jury. The 58-year-old photographer described this as

his first major award, making the recognition especially meaningful. He accepted the honor in the presence of senior dignitaries from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, the Ministry of External Affairs, ambassadors from big cat range countries, and representatives from the International Big Cats Alliance (IBCA) and leading conservation organizations. This achievement highlights the quality of wildlife photography emerging from Hyderabad and contributes to the global discourse on big cat conservation.

Telangana BJP Celebrates 'Seva Pakwada', Felicitates Achievers to Motivate Youth

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— Telangana State BJP President N. Ramchander Rao announced that the party organized the "Seva Pakwada" program at Delhi Public School, Nacharam, Hyderabad, to commemorate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday. The event was curated to inspire and motivate young minds. A major highlight was the felicitation of eminent personalities who have significantly contributed to society, including Padma Award recipients. Honorees ranged from doctors and sportspersons to achievers across diverse fields, aiming to celebrate accomplishments and provide a powerful source of inspiration for the youth. A core focus of the program was to instill a sense of purpose and advance the goal of a "Nasha Mukta Bharat" (Drug-Free Nation). Ramchander Rao encouraged students and youth to actively engage in sports and cultural activities as a means to stay away from drugs. The program received overwhelming participation and enthusiasm from students, youth, and the wider public.



DTF Busts Illegal Liquor Den in Nanakramguda; Two Held, Equipment Seized



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— The Shamshabad District Task Force (DTF), led by CI Praveen Kumar, successfully raided a location in Nanakramguda where locally brewed illicit liquor (Naatu Saraa) was being produced and sold. Acting on credible information, the team apprehended two individuals involved in the operation. Investigation revealed that the liquor was being produced in Dhoolpet by Radhika Bhai and Shankar. It was then transported and sold in Nana-

kramguda at ₹400 per liter through accomplices including Kishan Singh and Rekha Bai, who profited from the sales. The arrested individuals were handed over to the Serilingampally Excise Station. Excise Superintendent Krishna Priya confirmed that the DTF seized 10 liters of illicit liquor and the equipment used for its manufacture. The raid highlights the ongoing efforts by the Excise Department to curb the illegal trade of Naatu Saraa in the Greater Hyderabad region.

GHMC Commissioner Directs Intensified Sanitation, Road Safety Measures



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th— GHMC Commissioner R. V. Karnan conducted a review via WebEx on the ongoing Special Sanitation Drive and Road Safety Drive across Greater Hyderabad. He instructed Additional Commissioner for Sanitation Raghu Prasad and all Zonal Commissioners to ensure effective supervision and execution of the sanitation program. With the monsoon rains subsiding, Commissioner Karnan stressed the urgency of intensifying the Road Safety Drive. He issued a firm directive to all engineering officials to expedite pothole repairs citywide. The measures aim to prevent inconvenience to commuters and ensure smooth traffic flow, reducing jams caused by damaged road infrastructure. The directive reinforces GHMC's commitment to urban safety and infrastructure maintenance following the recent wet weather.

Harish Rao Welcomes Congress Leaders, Criticizes CM Revanth Reddy for Unfulfilled Promises



TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –
Former Minister and BRS MLA T. Harish Rao formally welcomed former Congress MPP Padma Narender of Gajwel and over a hundred Congress leaders into the BRS fold. Draping pink scarves on the new entrants, Rao lauded their decision to join the party, citing dissatisfaction with the “anti-farmer, anti-student, and anti-employment” policies of the current Congress government.
Launching a scathing attack on Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Rao accused him of failing to deliver on “six guarantees and 420 promises,” citing a bogus Rytu Bandhu bonus with ₹1,300 crore pending disbursement, stalled government salaries, and the unfulfilled pledge of two lakh jobs per year. He also criticized cuts to social welfare and pensions, highlighting the administration’s silence on the Mahalakshmi scheme and the ₹4,000 Cheyutha guarantee.
Rao concluded that the Revanth Reddy administration had shifted from governance to “revenge and retaliation,” warning that the public would deliver a strong response to Congress in the upcoming elections.

Telugu Students Seek Diverse Study Destinations Amid Stricter US, UK Visa Rules

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –
Students from Telugu-speaking states are increasingly looking beyond traditional study destinations like the US, UK, and Canada, as tightening visa norms and soaring costs challenge their overseas education plans.
The shift comes amid concerns over new US pro-

posals, including a dramatic hike in the H-1B visa fee to \$100,000 for fresh applications and a cap limiting international student enrolment to 15%. August 2025 saw US visa issuance drop sharply to 44%, further raising anxiety among prospective students.
Similarly, the UK’s inflationary pressures and

stricter immigration policies have made higher education and living expenses prohibitively high. In response, students are exploring alternatives such as New Zealand, Germany, and Italy, drawn by smoother visa procedures, affordability, and attractive post-study work options.

Education experts highlight that these trends indicate a long-term strategic pivot in global student mobility, with Telugu students seeking countries that align better with their career aspirations and financial planning, signaling a shift in traditional academic migration patterns.

Hyderabad’s Shanchol Vaccine Secures WHO Re-Approval, Reinforcing India’s Global Health Role

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –
Hyderabad solidifies its position as India’s vaccine hub as Shanchol, the oral cholera vaccine, receives critical WHO prequalification, enabling large-scale procurement by international agencies like UNICEF and Gavi.
Originally developed by Shantha Biotechnics and now manufactured by GCBC Vaccines Pvt Ltd (acquired in April 2024 by the Gland Family Office), Shanchol is

the only WHO-prequalified oral cholera vaccine made in India. This milestone ensures continued global supply of an affordable, life-saving vaccine against Vibrio cholerae O1 and O139, supporting countries facing cholera outbreaks.
GCBC Vaccines emphasized that WHO prequalification enables large-scale, reliable, and cost-effective distribution, further strengthening India’s contribution to global health security and equitable vaccine access.

Telangana Excise Department Honored for Outstanding Transparency

TPN BUREAU, HYD, Oct 9th –
The Telangana Prohibition and Excise Department received the prestigious Right to Information (RTI) Act Award 2025 for excellence in transparency and accountability. Commissioner C. Harikiran accepted the award in the “Best Performance Head of the Department” category from the Governor and the Chief Justice of the High Court at a ceremony held at Ravindra Bharati.
Commissioner Harikiran dedicated the honor to all department employees, highlighting their sustained efforts over the past five years in efficiently processing RTI applications and ensuring timely citizen access to information. The recognition underscores the department’s commitment to proactive governance and sets a benchmark for other government branches. Harikiran stated that the award will further motivate the department to uphold high standards of transparency and citizen-centric service.



Modi’s Political Dominance Faces No Real Disruption-Yet

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi approaches the first anniversary of his third term, his political footing appears more assured than ever. The initial wobble following the BJP’s reduced tally of 240 seats in the Lok Sabha has faded, replaced by a renewed confidence bolstered by recent victories in Maharashtra and Haryana—and, critically, the disarray within the Opposition.

But beneath this confidence lies a deeper truth: there is currently no disruptive idea, leader, or movement capable of challenging Modi’s dominance. The political climate is stagnant. The BJP, under Modi, has absorbed, repackaged, or outperformed the key planks of its rivals. The Opposition’s playbook—from secularism and social justice to rich-versus-poor populism—feels dated and dull in contrast.

Modi, meanwhile, continues to deliver efficient, targeted welfare to 80 crore citizens with schemes like free food grains, direct benefit transfers, and Mudra loans—making him more “pro-poor” in the public perception than his opponents. As a result, attacks branding him pro-corporate or elitist fail to stick, not because of PR spin, but because voters see real benefits.

The caste census, the latest Congress experiment, has failed to ignite public imagination. Within Congress-led states like Karnataka, the complexities it creates are already surfacing. The party, once a broad-based national umbrella, appears awkward and unconvincing in its new avatar as a caste-centric platform.

Attempts to challenge Modi on nationalism, religion, or “temple politics” are non-starters. The Opposition has no compelling ideological alternative and no charismatic disruptor.

Voters, particularly the floating 15%, are fatigued by predictable rhetoric and recycled promises.

Historically, Indian politics has been shaken by three big ideas: Garibi Hatao, Mandal, and Mandir. Today, none of these offer disruption. Hindutva remains the BJP’s strength; the rest are now shared or neutralised.

Globally, figures like Trump, Georgia Meloni, and Javier Milei have succeeded by breaking the mould. India once had its own libertarian spark in C. Rajagopalachari’s Swatantra Party, advocating small government, wealth creation, and freedom from state control—an idea that may be due for revival.

Unless a bold, alternative ideology—libertarian, not leftist nor statist—emerges, Modi will continue to dominate unchallenged. India doesn’t just need new leaders. It needs a new idea that can genuinely excite a bored, transactional electorate.



Straight Talk: Just How Big Is The Effect Of Trump Tariffs On India?

As geopolitical tensions and trade realignments reshape global commerce, India finds itself grappling with an increasingly hostile export environment, particularly from its largest trading partner, the United States. The recent wave of steep tariffs imposed by the current US administration is now threatening the very backbone of India’s export economy — its informal, labour-intensive sectors.

India’s bilateral trade with the US stood at \$131.84 billion, with the US accounting for nearly 18% of India’s total goods exports. Yet, tariffs as high as 50%–64% on Indian goods have left key industries in distress. Leather, textiles, electronics, pharmaceuticals, and especially gems and jewellery — sectors that form the core of India’s export basket — are bearing the brunt.

The informal economy, which absorbs more than 80% of India’s workforce, is the hardest hit. In Q1 FY26, informal manufacturing employment dropped by 9.3%, and the total informal workforce shrank by 2.1% to 12.86 crore. The number of enterprises declined by 4.7%, despite India’s overall GDP growing at 7.8%.

On the ground, in regions like Ambur, a leather hub, over 50 out of 300 factories have shut down since the US tariffs took effect. Workers like P. Gopi, once earning Rs 450 a day, have lost livelihoods, forcing families into crisis. Similarly, Tiruppur’s knitwear industry, responsible for over 60% of India’s knitwear exports, is struggling under a combined 64% tariff, pushing businesses toward Vietnam and Bangladesh, where duties are lower.

The gems and jewellery sector, employing nearly 10 lakh workers in Gujarat, is also under severe stress. The US, which imports \$10 billion worth of polished diamonds annually from India, has revised tariffs sharply, putting slim-margin polishing units at risk of collapse.

High-value sectors like electronics and pharmaceuticals, key to India’s “Make in India” push, also face long-term threats. The Chief Economic Adviser warned that tariffs could shave off 0.5%–0.6% of GDP growth, a figure likely to rise with recent pharma tariffs.

Unless India diversifies export destinations, strengthens access to finance, and resolves the structural fragilities in its informal economy, these external shocks risk cascading into long-term economic and social disruption — with vulnerable workers and industries paying the highest price.

Hyderabad : We need an urban climate emergency fund

This year’s monsoon has once again exposed the growing vulnerability of Hyderabad to climate-induced urban flooding. Torrential rain events through the 2025 season left key areas of the city waterlogged for days, damaging roads, disrupting power supply, and halting business operations. From upscale neighbourhoods to river-edge settlements, the deluge disrupted daily life and left thousands struggling to recover.

According to long-term data, Hyderabad’s average monsoon rainfall through the 20th century stood at 76.88 cm. Over the last 25 years, that average has surged to 91.84 cm. While scientists continue to study the precise links to climate change, for the city’s residents, the shifting rainfall patterns are already a lived reality. Each monsoon now carries the risk of devastation.

This year, basements of high-rises were flooded, vehicles were swept away, and roads collapsed under the weight of water. But the brunt was borne by the urban poor, especially those living in vulnerable areas like Moosa Nagar, Chaderghat, and Kishanbagh along the Musi River. For these communities, flooding meant more than just inconvenience—it meant the loss of rations, appliances, documents, and months of fragile financial stability.

Children have dropped out of school. The spread of water-borne illnesses has increased. With no insurance coverage or state relief readily available, families are left to rebuild their lives from scratch, often multiple times in a decade.

Yet, even as urban flooding becomes a regular monsoon occurrence in Indian cities, disaster relief continues to rely on ad hoc grants and delayed government responses. This reactive approach is proving inadequate in the face of intensifying climate events.

Experts now argue that cities like Hyderabad need a dedicated Urban Climate Emergency Fund—a proactive, fast-disbursing financial mechanism designed to support pre-disaster preparation and post-disaster recovery. Such a fund could cover emergency shelters, health kits, temporary schooling, and direct cash transfers to affected families.

The 2025 monsoon should be a wake-up call. As rainfall becomes more intense and less predictable, Indian cities must evolve from disaster response to climate resilience. A dedicated climate emergency fund is not just an environmental imperative—it is a social and economic necessity for urban India’s most vulnerable.



How Pakistan thinks: Army for hire, ideology of convenience

A sudden turn in Pakistan’s foreign policy has triggered global debate, as Islamabad appears to be moving closer to recognising Israel—an unimaginable move just weeks ago. This comes in the wake of former US President Donald Trump’s 20-point Gaza resolution, announced alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. In a surprising twist, Pakistan became the first Islamic nation to openly support the plan, even before regional powerhouses responded.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s effusive praise of Trump’s plan sparked confusion and quiet backtracking in Pakistan’s domestic discourse. But the episode is symptomatic of a deeper pattern in Pakistan’s geopolitical behaviour—one where ideological rhetoric rarely matches action.

Despite its self-declared identity as an Islamic republic, Pakistan’s strategic decisions have long been shaped not by Islamic solidarity, but pragmatic self-interest—and, more often than not, anti-India sentiment. Historically, Pakistan has never taken military action to defend any Muslim cause, even while invoking the Ummah in international forums like the OIC, especially over Kashmir.

Its military involvements in Islamic countries—from Jordan (1970) during the Palestinian revolt to Saudi Arabia (1979) during the Mecca siege—were not in defence of Islamic ideals but to protect ruling regimes. Even during the Gulf War, Pakistan joined forces to defend Saudi Arabia, not Iraq, and again acted in line with client-patron interests rather than ideology.

The Afghan example reveals even starker contradictions. Pakistan first supported the Mujahideen in the 1980s, only to join the US in fighting the Taliban post-9/11—highlighting a pattern of opportunism.

In reality, Pakistan’s military has long operated as a rentier force, offering strategic cooperation to the highest bidder—be it the US, Saudi Arabia, or now potentially Israel. Aid and arms deals, from Peace Gate F-16 transfers to Saudi stipends, were transactional, not ideological.

This emerging alignment with Israel—once unthinkable in Pakistani politics—underlines a seismic shift, but one that aligns with Pakistan’s enduring strategic logic: anything that undermines India, even at the cost of abandoning long-held Islamic positions, is acceptable.

In the end, Pakistan’s core ideology is not Islamism—it is anti-Indianism. As long as this defines its national identity, peace with India remains elusive. And any Pakistani leader who dares to challenge this status quo, from Benazir Bhutto to Nawaz Sharif, risks political punishment—often at the hands of the very army that controls the state.



PM Modi Inaugurates Rs 19,650-Crore Navi Mumbai International Airport



TPN Bureau | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today inaugurated the Navi Mumbai International Airport, marking a major milestone in India's aviation sector. Built at a cost of 19,650 crore, the Greenfield airport is expected to significantly boost trade, tourism, and connectivity across the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Pune, and the Konkan belt. PM Modi, joined by Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, and Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, was given a walk-through of the state-of-the-art facility before unveiling it to the public. Addressing the

gathering, PM Modi said the airport's inauguration ends Mumbai's long wait for a second major international gateway. "This is a big step toward the vision of Viksit Bharat, which aims for gati aur pragati (speed and progress)," he said. Highlighting the government's achievements, Modi noted that India had only 74 airports in 2014, which has now grown to 160, thanks in part to the UDAN scheme. "Lakhs of people have taken to the skies for the first time, fulfilling their dreams," he added. Chief Minister Fadnavis called the airport a "game-changer" that will "redefine air travel" and drive Maharashtra's growth. The airport, built under a

Public-Private Partnership between Mumbai International Airport Ltd (a subsidiary of Adani Airports Holdings Ltd) and CIDCO, is designed to handle 2 crore passengers annually in its initial phase, and eventually scale up to 90 million. Equipped with a 3,700-metre runway, the airport will operate in tandem with the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport to ease congestion and place Mumbai among global cities with multi-airport systems like London and Tokyo. Airlines such as IndiGo, Akasa Air, and Air India Express have already announced plans to operate from the new facility, with domestic routes launching soon.

Kerala Assembly Uproar: CM Vijayan's Height Remark Sparks Body Shaming Row

TPN Correspondent | Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's comment mocking the short stature of an opposition MLA has ignited a political storm and accusations of body shaming in the state assembly. The controversial remark came on Wednesday during a heated Assembly session marked by scuffles and shouting between ruling and opposition members over the alleged disappearance of gold from the dwarapalaka idols at the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple. As the Opposition boycotted proceedings, tensions escalated when some of its MLAs clashed with the House's watch and ward staff, including female personnel. In response, CM Vijayan, while addressing the unrest, made a veiled reference to an unnamed opposition legislator involved in the scuffle. Using colloquial language, the Chief Minister mocked the MLA's short height and suggested that his actions were not due to physical strength but because of the legislative immunity he enjoys as an elected representative. The comment quickly drew sharp criticism. Leader of the Opposition V D Satheesan condemned the Chief Minister's remark, calling it "politically incorrect" and "body shaming." He added, "Calling themselves progressives is meaningless. They ought to be living in 19th-century Spain." The episode has added fuel to the ongoing protests by the Opposition in the Assembly over the Sabarimala gold-plating controversy. The



Opposition has been demanding accountability over missing gold and accusing the ruling LDF government of trying to deflect from the issue. The height remark has now shifted the spotlight from the gold-plating issue

to concerns about the decorum of debate in the House, sparking fresh outrage on social media and in political circles. No apology or clarification has been issued by CM Vijayan so far.

Centre Rebuts Mamata's 'No Flood Funds' Claim, Says ₹1,290 Crore Released to Bengal

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Amid criticism from West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over the Centre's alleged inaction during the Darjeeling flash floods, the Union Jal Shakti Ministry on Tuesday clarified that the Central government has already released ₹1,290 crore to the state under the Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP). The Ministry rejected Banerjee's accusation that the Centre had not extended any financial help to manage the floods or responded to her repeated calls for setting up an Indo-Bhutan River Commission. In a statement, it said the Centre remains actively engaged with Bhutan on issues of river erosion, siltation, and flash floods affecting trans-border rivers in north Bengal. "The Government of India is in regular contact with Bhutanese authorities to address the shared concerns on river management," the Ministry said, adding that both countries are coordinating on mitigation efforts related to river debris and sudden water surges. Mamata Banerjee had earlier claimed that her government had received "zero support" from the Centre for tackling recurring flash floods in the region and demanded the formation of a joint river commission with Bhutan. She also criticised the Centre for not recognising the "urgent ecological threat" posed by trans-border rivers flowing from Bhutan into Bengal.



The Centre, however, maintained that it has provided substantial assistance through existing mechanisms, including FMBAP, and urged the state government to strengthen coordination with central agencies to implement flood control and disaster mitiga-

tion projects more effectively. The recent flash floods in north Bengal, triggered by intense rainfall and glacial water surges, have left several dead and displaced thousands, prompting a political row over relief and accountability.

Vijay Video Calls Families of Karur Stampede Victims, Promises Visit



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Nearly 10 days after the tragic stampede at Karur during his campaign rally that claimed 41 lives, actor-turned-politician Vijay reached out to bereaved families via video calls on Monday evening. The move comes amidst mounting criticism over his absence from the tragedy site and delay in offering condolences in person. The outreach, conducted by Vijay's party Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam (TVK), was coordinated by K G Arun Raj, TVK's general secretary for propaganda and policy. Raj, a former Income Tax official, led a team from Chennai to initiate the process. According to party insiders, at least eight families were contacted on the first day, with all 27 affected families expected to receive video calls in the coming days. Families were instructed not to record the private conversations, which lasted only a few minutes

each. Vijay reportedly expressed sorrow, offered support, and promised to meet them in person soon. The actor's low-profile response to the September 27 stampede had drawn sharp criticism from political opponents and sections of the public, who accused him of "fleeing" Karur the same night without meeting the victims' families. Many questioned the handling of crowd control at the event and the apparent lack of accountability. TVK leaders defended Vijay's response, citing security concerns and the need to avoid further disruption during the ongoing investigation. The party is reportedly planning a formal condolence meet later this month. While the video calls may ease some public anger, questions remain over event mismanagement and the future of TVK's mass outreach strategy as the state gears up for the upcoming 2026 Assembly elections.

Dulquer Salmaan, Film Stars' Houses Raided Again In Luxury Car Smuggling Case

Kerala HC Allows to Seek Release of Car



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Kerala High Court permitted actor Dulquer Salmaan to approach customs authorities for the provisional release of his seized luxury vehicle — a 2004 Land Rover Defender — taken during the recent crackdown under 'Operation Numkhor'. Justice V.G. Arun directed the actor to file an application under Section 110A of the Customs Act, 1962 with the Additional Commissioner of Customs in Kochi, who must decide on the matter within one week of submission. The court also emphasised that provisional release is a legal right under normal conditions and rejection, if any, must be backed by a "speaking order" detailing reasons. The Land Rover was among over 35 luxury vehicles seized during raids on multiple properties, including the residences of actors Dulquer Salmaan and Prithviraj Sukumaran. Customs officials allege

that these vehicles were illegally imported from Bhutan using falsified registrations to evade taxes. Dulquer had earlier submitted documents to prove the vehicle's legality, but his initial request for release was denied by Customs. Challenging the decision, the actor moved the High Court seeking relief. The court's interim order now opens the door for the actor to present his case again before the competent authority. Operation Numkhor, launched by Indian Customs, is aimed at identifying and penalising tax evasion involving the import of high-end vehicles through deceptive means. The investigation is still ongoing. On the professional front, Dulquer is preparing for the release of his Tamil-Telugu bilingual film 'Kaantha', a family drama teased on his 42nd birthday. The case highlights growing scrutiny on luxury imports and tax compliance in India's film industry and high society.

CIA Files Reveal Alleged Biden Cover-Up of Ukraine Corruption Complaints



TPN Correspondent | Sidoarjo

President Joe Biden's alleged involvement in suppressing corruption concerns in Ukraine during his tenure as Vice President in the Obama administration. According to a report by the New York Post, the files reveal that Ukrainian officials were "bewildered and disappointed" by Biden's anti-corruption speech during his December 2015 visit to Kyiv, citing his family's business ties to the controversial energy firm Burisma. The documents, recently uncovered during an internal CIA review ordered by Director John Ratcliffe, suggest that Biden's then-national security adviser, Colin Kahl, intervened to prevent a damaging intelligence report from being included in the President's Daily Brief (PDB). An internal CIA email dated February 10, 2016, from a person identified as "PDF Briefer" stated that Kahl "would strongly prefer the report not/ not be disseminated," a rare and highly unusual move for intelligence handling. At the time of Biden's speech, his

son Hunter Biden was reportedly earning USD 1 million annually as a board member at Burisma, a company long accused of corruption. Ukrainian officials, the documents say, privately viewed Biden's public remarks as hypocritical, given the ongoing US media scrutiny of Hunter Biden's role. The PDB is the most sensitive intelligence report delivered to the US President, compiling insights from across the 18-agency intelligence community. Intelligence officials claim this omission shielded the Obama administration from internal criticism and public scrutiny at a crucial time. The revelations add a new dimension to past accusations of political interference in foreign policy and intelligence reporting. The documents also implicate senior intelligence officials from the Obama era, including James Clapper, who is reportedly under federal investigation for his role in the Trump-Russia probe. The Biden administration has not yet responded to the claims.

Indian Captured Fighting for Russia in Ukraine, MEA Verifying Claim



TPN Correspondent | Pyongyang

Ukraine has claimed to have captured a 22-year-old Indian national allegedly fighting for the Russian army. The man, identified as Majoti Sahil Mohamed Hussein from Morbi, Gujarat, appeared in a video released by Ukraine's 63rd Mechanised Brigade. However, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has not yet confirmed his identity or the circumstances. "We are ascertaining the veracity of the report. No formal communication has been received from the Ukrainian side so far," MEA sources told NDTV. According to The Kyiv Independent, Hussein had initially gone to Russia for studies but ended up joining the Russian army under duress. In the video, Hussein claimed he was sentenced to seven years in a Russian prison on drug charges and was later offered a deal: military service in exchange for release. "I didn't want to stay in prison, so I

signed a contract for the 'special military operation'," he said, referring to Russia's war in Ukraine. After only 16 days of training, Hussein was sent on a combat mission on October 1. He claims to have fought for three days before surrendering to Ukrainian forces following a dispute with his commander. "I walked up to a Ukrainian trench, put down my rifle, and said I didn't want to fight. I needed help," he told the Ukrainian military. Hussein also alleged that promises of financial compensation were not fulfilled and expressed his unwillingness to return to Russia. This incident follows earlier reports that Russia has been recruiting foreign nationals, including Indians, with false job offers. In January, India reported 12 deaths and 16 missing cases among Indians misled into fighting for Russia. The Indian government has since raised the issue with Moscow, seeking early release of its citizens caught in the conflict.

“Transformative President”: Canadian PM Praises Trump Over India-Pak Peace

TPN Bureau | Washington

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney lauded former U.S. President Donald Trump as a "transformative president" during bilateral talks at the White House, notably crediting him for fostering peace between India and Pakistan. The remarks came during Carney's second visit to the Oval Office since assuming office in March 2025. "You hosted me and some of my colleagues a few months ago, and I said at the time, 'You are a transformative president,'" Carney told Trump. "Since then, the transformation in the economy, unprecedented commitments of NATO partners, peace from India-Pakistan through to Azerbaijan-Armenia, disabling Iran as a force of terror—these were important." Trump, visibly pleased, nodded during the exchange. He has repeatedly claimed credit for mediating a ceasefire between India and Pakistan during a 2025 border confrontation—claims that New Delhi has strongly denied. Indian officials have maintained that the ceasefire followed a request from Pakistan's military leadership and not due to third-party intervention. Carney's visit also comes ahead of a scheduled review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). While trade tensions persist—particularly over U.S. tariffs on Canadian lumber, aluminium, steel, and automobiles—Carney offered no concrete breakthroughs following the meeting. "We're focused on building new opportunities," he said in a later statement. During the meeting, Trump humorously referred to earlier controversial remarks about annexing Canada, joking about a "merger," to which Carney replied, "That wasn't where I was going." Despite the upbeat tone and mutual praise, the talks did not yield any announcements on tariff relief. Trump praised Carney as a "world-class leader" and hinted at future progress, stating, "I think they're going to walk away very happy." Carney concluded by reaffirming support for U.S. efforts in the Middle East and expressed optimism over future trade negotiations.



LeT-ISKP Alliance Exposed: ISI Weaponising Terror in Balochistan, Kashmir



TPN Correspondent | Paris

A new Indian intelligence dossier has revealed a dangerous nexus between Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), orchestrated and funded by Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The report highlights Pakistan's continued use of terror groups as tools of statecraft, now focusing on destabilising Balochistan, Afghanistan, and Kashmir. The dossier reveals that ISKP, once labelled un-Islamic by the Afghan Taliban, is being restructured by ISI to wage a hybrid war against Baloch nationalists and anti-Pakistan factions within the Taliban regime. Recent editions of ISKP's propaganda magazine Yalgaar also indicate a shift towards Kashmir, marking a dangerous expansion of the terror threat in South Asia. A crucial piece of evidence is a photograph showing ISKP's Balochistan coordinator, Mir Shafiq Mengal, handing a pistol to LeT's Nazim-e-Ala, Rana Mohammad Ashfaq. The image reportedly captures the formalisation of a terror alliance, crafted under direct ISI supervision. Mengal, son of ex-Balochistan Chief Minister Nasir Mengal, has long operated as an ISI asset. Known for running death squads targeting Baloch nationalists, he now facilitates ISKP operations, managing arms, funding, and logistics. Under ISI's guidance, ISKP bases were set up in Mastung and Khuzdar to suppress local resistance and stage attacks in Afghanistan. After Baloch fighters killed 30 ISKP militants in March 2025, the ISI turned to LeT to rebuild its proxy strength. By June 2025, LeT leaders Rana Ashfaq and Saifullah Kasuri hosted a Jigra in Balochistan, pledging jihad against "anti-Pakistan" forces. Experts warn the LeT-ISKP collaboration signals a new phase in Pakistan's proxy war doctrine—merging extremist factions under state control. The move could reignite terrorism in Kashmir and intensify unrest in Balochistan and Afghanistan. As Pakistan's denials grow weaker, the evidence of its deep state's terror complicity becomes harder to ignore.

UK PM Keir Starmer in India to Boost Trade Ties Post-FTA

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer arrived in Mumbai on Wednesday for a two-day visit aimed at strengthening economic and strategic ties with India following the signing of a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA) earlier this year. Accompanied by a 125-member delegation of top business leaders—including British Airways CEO Sean Doyle—Starmer's visit signals a renewed focus on expanding the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership under the "Vision 2035" roadmap. Upon arrival at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Starmer was welcomed by Maharashtra and Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, and Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar. Later on Wednesday, Starmer is expected to hold discussions with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. On Thursday, Starmer will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai. The leaders will review progress on the bilateral partnership and explore new areas of cooperation, particularly in fintech, defence, climate, and trade. The leaders will then address the CEO Forum and the 6th edition of the Global Fintech Fest, where they will engage with Indian and UK business leaders on opportunities arising from the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). With bilateral trade currently valued at \$54.8 billion, both countries



view the new FTA as a central pillar for future economic growth. The agreement includes tariff reductions on British

goods like whisky and medical devices and Indian exports like garments and frozen prawns. However, despite busi-

ness calls for expanded labour mobility, Starmer ruled out easing visa rules for Indian professionals.

Gold Hits Record High of ₹1.24 Lakh per 10 Grams

Gold prices soared by ₹700 reaching an all-time high of ₹1.24,000 per 10 grams in the national capital. This sharp jump comes amid rising global uncertainty, driven by fears of a prolonged US government shutdown and increasing expectations of further interest rate cuts by the US Federal Reserve. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the yellow metal of 99.9% purity had settled at ₹1,23,300 per 10 grams on Monday. The fresh surge marks a significant milestone for gold, which continues to gain favour as a safe-haven asset in times of economic and geopolitical turbulence. Traders and analysts attributed the price rally to strong safe-haven demand, as investors around the world are growing cautious. The risk of a fiscal deadlock in the United States, combined with the Fed's dovish signals, has weakened the dollar and boosted demand for gold. "Concerns over the US government shutdown and talk of more rate cuts have pushed investors toward safer assets like gold. The weakening of the dollar has further supported this up-trend," said a senior analyst from a Delhi-based bullion trading firm. In addition to global factors, strong domestic buying ahead of the festive season is also supporting prices in India. With festivals like Dussehra and Diwali approaching, demand for gold jewelry and investment products is expected to rise further, which could drive prices even higher. Silver also saw a modest gain, trading at ₹1,48,500 per kg, up by ₹500 from the previous close. Bullion traders expect volatility to persist in the coming weeks, with gold likely to remain firm if economic uncertainties continue to mount.



World Bank Ups India's Growth Forecast to 6.5% Remains Fastest-Growing Major Economy



The World Bank on Tuesday raised India's GDP growth forecast for 2025-26 to 6.5%, up from its earlier estimate of 6.3%, reaffirming India's position as the world's fastest-growing major economy. The upward revision comes on the back of robust consumption growth, improved rural demand, and favourable domestic conditions. According to the World Bank's South Asia Development Update (October 2025), India's economic momentum has been supported by better-than-expected agricultural output and rising rural wages. Recent reforms in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) — including simplification of compliance and reduction in tax brackets — have also contributed to boosting business activity. "India is expected to remain the world's fastest-growing major economy," the report stated, highlighting strong internal drivers of growth. However, the World Bank also issued a cautionary note, citing external risks. The imposition of 50% tariffs by the United States on nearly 75% of Indian exports is expected to impact trade and may slow down economic growth in the coming year. As a result, the GDP forecast for 2026-27 has been revised downward to 6.3%, from the earlier projection of 6.5%. The report noted that growth across South Asia is projected to slow sharply from 6.6% in 2025 to 5.8% in 2026, mainly due to weaker export demand and tightening global financial conditions. Despite the slowdown, South Asia will still outperform other emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs). Inflation in India is expected to remain within the Reserve Bank of India's target range, aided by stable commodity prices and monetary policy continuity. Overall, while India's economic outlook remains strong, the report emphasizes the need to stay vigilant amid rising global trade tensions and policy uncertainties.

Tata Trusts Infighting Deepens, Govt Steps In Amid 'Coup Attempt' Allegations

A power struggle within Tata Trusts, the principal shareholder of Tata Sons, has escalated sharply, with reports of a "coup attempt" by four trustees against Chairman Noel Tata. The infighting has drawn the attention of the government, which is now actively engaging to prevent instability at the \$180-billion Tata Group. Sources close to the Tata Group told CNBC-TV18 that the Centre is "fully seized of the matter" and cannot remain a silent spectator. The tension centres around governance issues, board appointments at Tata Sons, and a growing divide between factions of trustees. On Tuesday evening, Noel Tata and Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran, accompanied by Vice-Chairman Venu Srinivasan and trustee Darius Khambata, held a closed-door meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also attended the high-level discussions. The current rift is reportedly driven by four trustees — Darius Khambata, Jehangir HC Jehangir, Pramit Jhaveri, and Mehli Mistry — who are alleged to be functioning as a "super board," undermining Noel Tata's authority. Key disagreements include the proposed ₹1,000-crore equity infusion into Tata International, chaired by Noel Tata, and suggestions around new executive roles at Tata Sons. In contrast, the faction opposed by Noel Tata reportedly pushed for the appointment of Mehli Mistry to the Tata Sons board—an idea Noel resisted. Discontent over unilateral decisions has been reflected in internal communications, including a May 26 email from Mistry objecting to board appointments without full trustee approval. The Tata Trusts board is set to meet on October 10, with key philanthropic decisions on the agenda. While sources claim the meeting is unrelated to the internal tensions, many expect the power struggle to overshadow proceedings. The government's intervention underlines the high stakes, as continued insta-



bility could impact the broader functioning of one of India's most critical corporate institutions.

September CPI Seen at 1.2% Amid Sharp Fall in Food Prices



India's retail inflation is expected to ease significantly, with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) projected at just 1.2% for September 2025, according to Bank of Baroda's latest Price Picture report. The report attributes this sharp moderation to continued deflation in essential food items, especially tomatoes, onions, and potatoes (TOP), alongside a favourable base effect. The BoB Essential Commodities Index (BoB ECI) remained in deflation for the fifth straight month, showing a 1% year-on-year decline in September and a sharper 3.8% fall in the first six days of October. Month-on-month, the index dropped 0.3%, indicating sustained easing in food price pressures. Retail prices of tomatoes fell by 8.3% in September, while onions and potatoes witnessed even steeper declines — 46.2% and 30.9%, respectively. These corrections were driven by strong market arrivals and efficient supply chain management. "Headline CPI is experiencing a food-driven downward spiral, supported by robust arrival statistics of TOP vegetables," the report stated. Notably, cumulative arrivals of these key vegetables rose by 10.3% in FYTD26, a sharp turnaround from a 15.4% contraction during the same period last year. Additionally, global food prices have remained favourable, and recent GST rate cuts by automakers, FMCG companies, and e-commerce platforms are also contributing to the disinflationary trend. Bank of Baroda now expects the headline CPI to fall well below the Reserve Bank of India's inflation forecast for FY26, easing pressure on monetary policy and potentially creating room for rate cuts if needed. The continued deflationary trend could also support consumer sentiment and boost discretionary spending in the upcoming festive season, further aiding economic recovery.

Rupee Rises 2 Paise to 88.75 Against U.S. Dollar Amid Range-Bound Trade



The Indian rupee appreciated marginally by 2 paise to 88.75 against the U.S. dollar in early trade on Wednesday, tracking a positive trend in domestic equities and limited inflows linked to ongoing IPO activity. The local currency had closed at 88.77, after falling 3 paise. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 88.76 and moved slightly to 88.75, showing modest strength despite ongoing global headwinds. Traders described the movement as range-bound, with broader cues keeping the currency under pressure. "Rupee is expected to remain in the range of 88.50 to 89.00 for the day as inflows on account of IPOs remain tepid with subscriptions being completed only on the last day," said Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP. He also warned that negative global cues, including a stronger dollar index and weaker Asian currencies, could challenge the rupee's position unless the RBI steps in to defend the crucial 88.80 level. The dollar index, which measures the greenback's strength against a basket of six major currencies, was trading higher at 98.85, up 0.28%. Meanwhile, Brent crude oil rose 0.75% to \$65.94 per barrel, putting some pressure on import-heavy economies like India. On the equity front, domestic markets opened strong with the Sensex gaining 254.02 points to reach 82,180.77, while the Nifty rose by 70.25 points to 25,178.55. Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net buyers on Tuesday, investing ₹1,440.66 crore in Indian equities, according to exchange data. Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal also noted that India and the U.S. remain in active talks over a bilateral trade agreement, though the ongoing U.S. government shutdown may delay further negotiations.

Indian Engineer Sparks Debate Over 100-Hour Work Weeks

An Indian software engineer at AI startup Mercor has ignited online debate after revealing he works 72 to 100 hours a week. Pranav Mehta, a former Microsoft employee, described the intense schedule as a “worthwhile trade-off” for rapid personal and professional growth.

Mehta’s comments followed a post by Mercor CEO Brendan Foody, who announced the company had grown from a \$1 million to a \$500 million revenue run rate in just 17 months, calling it the

“fastest growing company of all time.” Mercor is now aiming for a \$10 billion valuation.

Acknowledging that such long hours may appear “daunting,” Mehta highlighted the unmatched learning opportunities at the firm. “A comfy 40-hour week won’t offer the same upside,” he wrote on X (formerly Twitter), defending the demanding work schedule as part of the startup’s high-growth culture.

His remarks, however, quickly sparked backlash. Many social media users criticised the glorification of extreme

work hours, raising concerns about burnout, mental health, and toxic workplace culture.

One user questioned the mindset behind such schedules, asking, “Why do you guys try to flaunt toxic work culture as hustle culture?” Another sarcastically noted, “Dada, you don’t have mental issues,” pointing to the potential mental toll of such intense routines.

Some offered a more optimistic perspective. A user suggested that the “working environment must be lit and hyped up all the time,” implying that the ener-

getic atmosphere might justify the high level of commitment.

The discussion reflects ongoing tensions in India’s tech sector, where startups often push employees to extreme limits for rapid growth, sparking debates over the balance between ambition and employee well-being.

Pranav Mehta’s post has reignited conversations about whether the drive for professional advancement is worth the personal cost, highlighting the growing scrutiny of “hustle culture” in the country’s booming tech industry.



‘Alien’ Diamond Created on Earth, Harder Than Natural Diamonds

In a groundbreaking development, Chinese scientists have successfully created a rare form of diamond—known as hexagonal diamond or lonsdaleite—in a laboratory setting, marking a major leap in material science. This ultra-hard crystal is naturally found only in meteorites and is believed to be significantly harder than conventional diamonds.

Published in Nature, the study was led by researchers from the Centre for High-Pressure Science & Technology Advanced Research. They achieved the feat by transforming high-purity graphite into hexagonal diamond under carefully controlled high-pressure, high-temperature, and quasi-hydrostatic conditions. The result: highly ordered, micro-metre-sized diamond samples that could out-



perform traditional diamonds in industrial and electronic applications.

Unlike standard cubic diamonds, which can fracture along specific planes, hexagonal diamonds have a more robust atomic structure. Until now, attempts to synthesize them in labs had mostly produced ordinary diamonds due to structural instability during formation.

Lead researcher Yang Liuxiang attributed the success to two key innovations. First, the use of ultra-pure natural graphite as the starting material ensured minimal defects. Second, real-time X-ray imaging allowed researchers to monitor and control the transformation process, avoiding common synthesis errors.

“This sets a new methodological founda-

tion for future material breakthroughs,” said Yang.

Ho-kwang Mao, a high-pressure science expert and foreign member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, called the breakthrough a “new pathway” to next-generation superhard materials and advanced electronics.

With its exceptional hardness and thermal properties, the synthetic hexagonal diamond—produced at the hundred-micron scale—could revolutionize industries requiring ultra-durable materials, from cutting tools to high-performance semiconductor.

The achievement not only advances diamond synthesis but also opens doors to engineering other rare materials found only in extreme cosmic environments.

Eritrea: The Only Country With No Mobile Internet Access

In a world where even the remotest regions are becoming digitally connected, the East African nation of Eritrea stands out as a rare exception—one where mobile internet is virtually non-existent.

Located in the Horn of Africa and bordered by Djibouti, Sudan, and Ethiopia, Eritrea remains one of the most isolated and secretive countries on the planet. Despite technological advancements globally, the vast majority of Eritreans have never used mobile data, accessed social media, or made a digital transaction.

Asmara, the capital city, reflects the country’s limited digital infrastructure. There are no functional ATMs, and only a few select locations—such as hotels and government build-



ings—have access to fixed-line internet. Even that is heavily monitored and unreliable. For ordinary citizens, connecting to the internet on mobile phones is simply not an option.

Eritrea’s extreme digital disconnect is closely tied to its political structure. Often referred to as the “North Korea of Africa,” Eritrea has been

under authoritarian rule since gaining independence from Ethiopia in 1993. The government tightly controls information, restricts freedom of expression, and mandates indefinite national ser-

vice for its citizens. International organizations and human rights groups have long criticized the regime for its lack of transparency and suppression of basic freedoms. The country ranks among the lowest globally in terms of press freedom and internet accessibility.

While the rest of Africa sees growing digital economies and social media revolutions, Eritrea remains cut off—its citizens deprived of the connectivity that powers modern life. For many young Eritreans, the idea of streaming a video, checking messages, or browsing the web is not a daily habit—it’s an unimaginable luxury.

In an age defined by digital transformation, Eritrea remains one of the few countries still living largely offline.

NHAI to Install QR Code Signboards on Highways for Emergency and Utility Info



The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has announced a new initiative to install QR code-enabled signboards across the national highway network, aimed at improving road safety, transparency, and commuter convenience. This move, revealed in a press release by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, will allow travellers to instantly access critical information by scanning QR codes while on the move.

The vertical signboards will feature project-specific details such as the national highway number, chainage, project length, and timelines for construction and maintenance. More importantly, they will pro-

vide quick access to emergency helpline numbers, including 1033, as well as contact details of key officials like highway patrol officers, toll managers, project managers, resident engineers, and NHAI field offices.

Additionally, the QR codes will offer digital access to nearby essential services such as hospitals, petrol pumps, toilets, police stations, restaurants, vehicle repair shops, truck laybys, toll plazas, and electric vehicle charging stations. This will help travellers locate emergency and utility services quickly, making journeys safer and smoother.

To maximize impact, NHAI plans to place these QR code sign-

boards at strategic locations such as toll plazas, rest areas, wayside amenities, truck laybys, and at the start and end points of highway stretches.

The Ministry emphasized that beyond providing project information, these signboards will enhance road safety by improving access to emergency services and boost user experience by increasing awareness about the national highways.

This initiative represents a significant step towards leveraging technology for safer, more informed travel on India’s highways, reflecting NHAI’s commitment to enhancing commuter convenience and transparency in infrastructure projects.

Is Coconut Safe for Diabetics? Experts Weigh In on Health Benefits and Risks

Coconut is a staple in Indian households, used in everything from curries to chutneys. But for the millions living with diabetes, the question remains: Is coconut safe to consume regularly?

Health experts suggest that coconut can be included in a diabetic-friendly diet—but in moderation. The white flesh of the coconut, though slightly sweet, contains relatively low net carbohydrates due to its high fibre content. This fibre slows down digestion and reduces the risk of sudden spikes in blood sugar, making it a better alternative to many refined carbohydrate foods.

A study published in the British Journal of Nutrition supports this claim, stating that coconut flour and other fibre-rich foods are associated with a lower glycemic index in both healthy individuals and those with diabetes. This means co-



conut-based foods may have a gentler effect on blood sugar levels.

However, the story doesn’t end there. Coconut is also high in calories and saturated fat. This makes it a double-edged sword, especially for diabetics who already face an increased risk of cardio-

vascular issues. Overconsumption could lead to weight gain and heart-related complications, negating the benefits of its fibre content.

Nutritionists advise strict portion control. A few tablespoons of grated coconut or a small amount of coco-

nut milk in cooking is generally considered safe for most diabetics. However, regularly consuming large quantities—especially in sweets or fried dishes—could be harmful.

In conclusion, coconut is not off-limits for diabetics, but it must be consumed mindful-

ly. Diabetic individuals should consult their doctors or dietitians before making coconut a regular part of their diet, especially in high-fat forms like coconut oil or cream.

Moderation is key—coconut can be part of a healthy diabetic diet when used wisely.

Women’s ODI: Mlaba, Brits Shine as South Africa Crushes New Zealand



South Africa bounced back in style at the ICC Women’s ODI World Cup, registering a comprehensive six-wicket victory over New Zealand at the Holkar Stadium on Monday. Spinner Nonkululeko Mlaba, along with batters Tazmin Brits and Sune Luus, played key roles in dismantling the White Ferns and guiding the Proteas to their second win in the tournament.

After suffering a heavy defeat to England in their previous outing, South Africa returned with renewed energy. Left-arm spinner Mlaba spun a web around the Kiwi batters, picking up a superb four-wicket haul, helping restrict New Zealand to 231 all out.

The chase got off to a slightly shaky start when captain Laura Wolvaardt fell early, but the Proteas didn’t falter. Brits and Luus built a massive 170-run stand for the second wicket, effectively taking the game away from New Zealand.

Brits, aggressive yet composed, smashed 101 off 89 balls, including 15 fours and a six. Her century celebration, a dramatic ‘archer pose’, was met with cheers from the crowd. This was her second century in ODI cricket and came at a crucial moment in the campaign.

Luus anchored the innings with finesse, finishing unbeaten on 83 off 114 balls, as South Africa crossed the finish line with more than four overs to spare.

The win not only lifts South Africa up the points table but also restores confidence after a tough start. For New Zealand, the loss puts their semifinal hopes in jeopardy, with bowlers struggling to make breakthroughs and the batting effort falling short of a competitive total.

With this result, South Africa reasserts its credentials as a serious contender, while highlighting the value of spin and partnerships in tournament cricket.



Barcelona Thrashed 4-1 by Sevilla as Lewandowski Misses Penalty

Barcelona’s woes deepened as they suffered a crushing 4-1 defeat to Sevilla in La Liga on Sunday, marking their second consecutive loss after a midweek setback to PSG in the Champions League.

Already hampered by the absence of teenage star Lamine Yamal, who is out for 2-3 weeks with a groin injury, Robert Lewandowski’s missed penalty in the 74th minute further compounded their misery. His stutter-step attempt went wide left, denying Barça a chance to equalize when the score was 2-1.

Sevilla, who hadn’t beaten Barcelona in La Liga in over a decade, capitalized early in scorching 33°C heat. Isaac Romero earned a penalty after being fouled by Ronald Araujo, which Alexis Sanchez converted in the 13th minute. Romero then doubled the lead in the 36th, finishing off a counter after Jules Koundé lost possession.

Barcelona’s only bright spot came from Marcus Rashford, who scored his first La Liga goal just before half-time, redirecting a Pedri cross. But Sevilla struck twice more late on: Jose Angel Carmona in the 89th minute and Akor Adams deep into stoppage time.

With the result, Real Madrid remain top of the table, two points ahead of Barcelona, after their 3-1 win over Villarreal.

Barça coach Hansi Flick admitted, “It’s a tough defeat. But we must regroup and fight for every title after the break.”

Elsewhere, Atletico Madrid were held 1-1 by winless Celta Vigo after going down to 10 men. Alaves beat Elche 3-1, Real Betis edged Espanyol 2-1, and Rayo Vallecano won 1-0 away at Real Sociedad.

Shanghai Masters: Zverev Stunned by World No. 54 Arthur Rinderknech

In a major upset at the Shanghai Masters, third seed Alexander Zverev was knocked out in his opening match by 54th-ranked Arthur Rinderknech, who came back from a set down to win 4-6, 6-3, 6-2 on Monday. The Frenchman, who had already defeated Zverev earlier this year at Wimbledon in a five-set thriller, repeated the feat, sealing a famous win in just over two hours.

Zverev looked in control after a confident first set but failed to maintain his momentum. Rinderknech broke once in the second set and twice in the third, while Zverev failed to convert a single break point after the opening set. The loss means the tournament’s highest-ranked remaining player is now out.

Rinderknech, 30, is enjoying a career-best season with 23 wins and will now face Jiri Lehecka, who defeated Denis Shapovalov 6-4, 6-4, for a place in the quarterfinals.

Elsewhere, Alex De Minaur, the seventh seed, beat Kamil Majchrzak 6-1, 7-5 under humid conditions to notch his 36th hard-court win of the season and reach his seventh Masters 1000 fourth round of 2025. He next faces Nuno Borges, who edged out Shang Juncheng in three sets.

Felix Auger-Aliassime also progressed, defeating Jesper de Jong 6-4, 7-5 despite a mid-match slip that required help from a ball kid. He will next face fellow seed Lorenzo Musetti, who beat Luciano Darderi 7-5, 7-6(1).

Meanwhile, defending champion Jannik Sinner retired mid-match due to cramps, while Carlos Alcaraz skipped the tournament entirely due to minor injuries. In another surprise, American teenager Learner Tien stunned Cameron Norrie 7-6(4), 6-3.



Australia Announces Squads for Home ODIs, First 2 T20Is Against India

Cricket Australia (CA) on Tuesday named the squads for the upcoming home white-ball series against India, featuring three ODIs starting October 19 and the first two T20Is from October 29. The squads mark the return of several key players, including fast bowler Mitchell Starc and opener Matt Short.

Starc, who had retired from T20 internationals last month ahead of next year’s ICC T20 World Cup, will make a comeback in the ODI series. His return bolsters Australia’s bowling attack, especially with the absence of injured skipper Pat Cummins. In his stead, Mitch Marsh will captain both the ODI and T20I teams against India.

The Indian squad is expected to be strong, led by their new ODI captain Shubman Gill and boosted by the returns of veterans Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli. This sets the stage for an exciting contest between two powerful line-ups.

In addition to Starc and Short, Australia has recalled Matt Renshaw and Mitchell Owen to the ODI squad. These changes come after the Australian team’s recent 2-1 series loss to South Africa.

Dropped from the ODI squad are Aaron Hardie, Matthew Kuhnemann, and Marnus Labuschagne. Labuschagne will focus on four-day cricket for Queensland in the Sheffield Shield as he prepares for the Test series against England later this year.

With Starc’s return and Marsh’s leadership, Australia aims to challenge India strongly in both formats, providing fans with a highly competitive and entertaining series ahead.

Lakshya Sen, Srikanth Lead Indian Charge at Arctic Open 2025

World Championship medalists Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth will spearhead India’s campaign at the Arctic Open 2025, beginning Tuesday in Vantaa, Finland. The BWF Super 500 tournament offers Sen another opportunity to claim his first title of the year after falling short in the Hong Kong Open final and suffering an early exit at the China Masters.

Srikanth, a former World No. 1, arrives on the back of strong performances, including a semifinal finish at the Al Ain Masters and a runner-up showing at the Malaysia Masters earlier this year.

India’s men’s singles draw also features Ayush Shetty, the nation’s only BWF World Tour title winner this year, having clinched the US Open in June. He faces a tough opener against Paris 2024 silver medalist Kunlavut Vitidsarn. Other Indian shuttlers in the draw include Kiran George, S Sankar Muthusamy, and Tharun Mannepal.

In a major setback, Asian Games gold medalists Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have withdrawn from the men’s doubles event.

The women’s singles campaign will be led by rising stars Tanya Hemant and Anmol Kharb, with PV Sindhu absent from the tournament. Kavipriya Selvam will also compete, having made it through the qualifiers.

India’s mixed doubles hopes rest on Tanisha Crasto and Dhruv Kapila, while Selvam teams up with Simran Singhi in women’s doubles.

No Indian player has ever won a title at the Arctic Open, and the 2025 edition presents a fresh opportunity for India’s young squad to break that streak.





Samantha to star in Simbu & Vetrimaaran’s film?

In a major development that has stirred excitement among Tamil cinema fans, actor Silambarasan TR (Simbu) and acclaimed director Vetrimaaran have joined hands for the first time for a project tentatively titled #STR49. What makes the announcement even more thrilling is that the film will be part of the Vada Chennai universe, a detail confirmed by Vetrimaaran himself during a recent award function.

Vada Chennai, released in 2018, is widely regarded as a modern-day cult classic. With its gritty portrayal of North Chennai’s underworld and powerful performances, it set a new benchmark in Tamil cinema. The idea of expanding this universe has sparked tremendous anticipation, especially with a versatile actor like Simbu on board.

According to the latest buzz in Kollywood circles, the film’s makers have initiated talks with actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu to play the female lead. Though discussions are still in the early stages, if confirmed, this will mark the first collaboration between Simbu and Samantha, two of the most popular stars in the South Indian film industry.

Adding further star power to the film, Anirudh Ravichander is expected to compose the music. Known for his chart-topping albums and electrifying scores, his involvement has only raised expectations.

The project will be bankrolled by renowned producer Kalaippuli S Thanu under the prestigious V Creations banner, known for backing several blockbuster hits.

Fans won’t have to wait long for a sneak peek—a title glimpse of #STR49 is set to be unveiled tomorrow morning. With such a powerful team coming together and the legacy of Vada Chennai behind it, #STR49 is shaping up to be one of the most-awaited films in Tamil cinema.



LIK Postpones Release, Avoids Diwali Clash with Pradeep Ranganathan’s Dude

The much-anticipated sci-fi romantic comedy LIK (Love Insurance Kampany), headlined by Pradeep Ranganathan, was initially slated for a Diwali 2025 release, clashing with another Pradeep-led project, Dude. However, the box office face-off has now been officially averted, with the makers of LIK announcing a new release date — December 18, 2025.

In a statement, the LIK team likened the potential clash to “two trains on the same track,” emphasizing that such a scenario would have benefited neither film. Opting for a strategic move, the team decided to delay the release, allowing both projects the space to shine. They also extended their

heartfelt wishes to the Dude team, showing camaraderie in an industry often marked by fierce competition.

LIK is directed by Vignesh Shivan, known for his unique blend of humour, romance, and emotion. The film features Krithi Shetty as the female lead, alongside a star-studded supporting cast that includes SJ Suryah, Yogi Babu,

Gouri G Kishan, and Mysskin.

The project is being jointly produced by SS Lalit Kumar of Seven Screen Studio and Rowdy Pictures, the banner run by Vignesh Shivan and Nayanthara. With Anirudh Ravichander on-board as the music composer, expectations are high for a youthful, vibrant soundtrack that com-

plements the film’s quirky premise.

LIK’s new December release gives it a solo window at the box office, increasing its chances for commercial success. Fans of Pradeep Ranganathan can now look forward to two different releases — Dude this Diwali and LIK just before Christmas, ensuring a double treat to end 2025 on a high note.



‘Bad Boy Karthik’ Teaser Out: Naga Shaurya Returns in Mass Avatar

Actor Naga Shaurya is back in action with his latest film Bad Boy Karthik, a high-octane mass entertainer that marks the directorial debut of Raam Desina. After a brief break from the big screen, Shaurya returns in a rugged new avatar, promising to showcase a wilder and fiercer side than ever before.

The makers unveiled the official teaser of the film, and it’s packed with adrenaline-fueled action sequences, punchy dialogues, and a glimpse into the protagonist’s intense journey. Shaurya’s transformation into the titular Bad Boy Karthik is evident, as he sports a bulked-up physique and a raw, aggressive style.

The teaser also introduces the film’s key characters. Vidhi Yadav plays the female lead and Shaurya’s romantic interest, while seasoned actors Samuthirakani, Naresh VK, and Saikumar appear in powerful supporting roles. Venela Kishore adds a dash of comedy, ensuring the film strikes a balance between action and entertainment.

With music composed by Harris Jayaraj, the film has already created buzz through its songs, and the teaser only adds to the anticipation. The background score amps up the intensity, hinting at a storyline driven by revenge, redemption, and raw emotion.

Produced by Ramesh under the banner of Ramesh Films, Bad Boy Karthik is being positioned as a complete commercial entertainer aimed at fans of mass cinema. With its slick visuals, explosive action, and a mass-appeal lead, the film is expected to be a game-changer for Naga Shaurya.

The release date is yet to be announced, but the teaser has set the tone — Bad Boy Karthik is coming, and he means business.

Baahubali: The Epic’ Re-Release on Oct 31; No Baahubali 3 Announcement Yet

The legendary Baahubali franchise, which reshaped the landscape of Indian cinema, is set to return to theatres in a grand re-release as Baahubali: The Epic on October 31, 2025. The two-part magnum opus, directed by SS Rajamouli and starring Prabhas in the iconic role of Amarendra and Mahendra Baahubali, will hit screens in major premium formats across India.

In the lead-up to the re-release, rumours began circulating that the new cut would include a teaser for Baahubali 3, sending fans into a frenzy. However, producer Shobu Yarlagadda has put all speculation to rest.

“There won’t be a Baahubali 3 announcement for sure,” he said in a recent interview. “We might have some other surprise, but it isn’t related to Baahubali 3. There is still a lot more work to be done for the third part.”

While a direct sequel is not yet in the works, Yarlagadda hinted at something equally exciting. “This re-release is not just a one-off thing. It’s the beginning of Phase 2 of the Baahubali universe. We believe there are plenty of untold stories in this world.”

This statement has sparked new curiosity among fans about potential spin-offs, prequels, or web series based on characters from the Baahubali uni-



verse. SS Rajamouli has previously expressed interest in expanding the franchise beyond films, possibly exploring the medium of streaming or animation.

For now, audiences can revisit the grandeur of Baahubali: The Beginning and Baahubali 2: The Conclusion in remastered glory. While Baahubali 3 may not be arriving just yet, something big is clearly brewing in Mahishmati.

Roshan’s ‘Champion’ Set for Christmas Release

Young actor Roshan is all set to make a powerful return to the big screen with his upcoming film Champion, which is officially locked for a Christmas release. The much-anticipated period sports drama, directed by National Award-winning filmmaker Pradeep Advaitam, will hit theatres on December 25, just in time to leverage the festive season.

The makers confirmed the release date with a striking new poster showing Roshan stepping out of an aircraft in a dark belted overcoat, hinting at a stylish and intense character transformation. With the

shoot nearing completion, buzz around the film is beginning to build as audiences look forward to holiday releases.

Champion is said to blend the excitement of sports with a deep emotional arc, balancing action with romance. Roshan reportedly underwent a complete makeover for the role, with early glimpses promising a more mature and impactful performance from the young star.

The film stars Anaswara Rajan as the female lead opposite Roshan. Their on-screen chemistry is expected to add depth to the love story

that runs parallel to the central sports narrative.

Produced jointly by Swapna Cinemas, Anandi Art Creations, and Concept Films, Champion is presented by Zee Studios, adding strong backing to the film’s release and distribution plans.

With a prime release date, a compelling mix of drama, sport, and romance, and an acclaimed director at the helm, Champion is positioning itself as a major contender for the 2025 holiday box office.

Stay tuned as more promotional content and the official trailer are expected to drop in the coming weeks.

