



BUZZ POINTS



TELANGANA
RISING VISION
2047: POWER
DEPARTMENT AT
THE FOREFRONT

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhathi Vikramarka, also Minister for Finance, Energy, and Planning, has emphasized the critical role of the Power Department in realizing the ambitious Telangana Rising Vision 2047. During a detailed review meeting held on Friday at the Khammam District Collectorate, officials from the undivided Khammam and Warangal districts presented progress reports and upcoming initiatives.

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FREE FISH
DISTRIBUTION
PROGRAM LAUNCHED
IN MAKTAL

In a landmark welfare initiative, Ministers Damodara Rajanarsimha and Dr. Vakiti Srihari launched a free fish seed distribution program across Maktal Mandal on Friday. The program, organized under the State Fisheries Department, aims to provide sustainable livelihoods and nutritional support to thousands of families. Fish were released into the Sanghmband Reservoir and the Peddacheruvu mini-tank bund in Maktal town.

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Telangana Gears Up For BC Bandh Today

Telangana is gearing up for a significant bandh on Saturday, October 18, as Backward Classes (BC) organisations intensify their push for enhanced reservations in local body elections. The protest, orchestrated by the Backward Classes Joint Action Committee (BC JAC), is expected to be one of the most impactful in recent years, mobilising political and social groups across the state.

TPN Bureau,

Hyderabad, Oct 17: The bandh primarily seeks implementation of 42% reservation for BCs in local body polls and aims to increase pressure on both the State and Central governments to fulfil long-standing demands of social justice. BC JAC Chairman and Rajya Sabha MP R. Krishnaiah will lead the protest at Barkatpura, emphasizing that the movement is non-political and justice-oriented. He appealed to citizens to cooperate peacefully and urged businesses to close down voluntarily, assuring that essential services will

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Telangana Strengthens Land Records with Licensed Surveyors

In a landmark initiative to modernize land administration and strengthen rural governance, Telangana Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy announced that every mandal will soon have 4–6 licensed surveyors. The licenses will be formally distributed on October 19 by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy at Shilpa Kalavedika, ensuring trained professionals are available at the grassroots level for accurate land surveys and records.

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ED Cracks Down on Illegal Forex Operations in Hyderabad

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted raids at five locations in Hyderabad on October 16, uncovering illegal foreign exchange operations by several unlicensed firms, exposing a sophisticated network of unauthorised transactions. The targeted firms include Prism Forex Pvt Ltd, Garuda Forex Services Pvt Ltd, Sree Vimal Nath Forex Pvt Ltd, Victory Forex & Travel Services Pvt Ltd, and Digital Forex Pvt Ltd.



TPN Bureau,

Hyderabad, Oct 17: The ED seized ₹11.99 lakh in cash and foreign currency worth approximately ₹26.77 lakh, along with crucial documents, laptops, and mobile devices detailing illicit transactions. Earlier inspections by the Reserve Bank of India had revealed multiple violations, including forged travel documents, fake KYC records, and manipulated flight details. Some transactions were re-

corded for countries where visas are not mandatory, such as Indonesia, Maldives, Thailand, and Sri Lanka, suggesting widespread deception. Despite surrendering their RBI licences in June-July, firms like Prism Forex, Victory Forex, and Digital Forex continued operations, displaying forged RBI certificates to mislead customers. Officials say investigations are ongoing, with a focus on tracing the flow of illegal foreign currency and identifying the broader net-

work behind the unauthorised exchanges. The raids underscore the challenges faced by regulators in curbing financial malpractices in urban centres and highlight the ED's proactive approach to enforcing compliance under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). Authorities are also evaluating penalties and potential criminal proceedings against the firms involved, sending a strong signal against financial irregularities.

Congress Joins Hands for BC Bandh Against HC Stay



TPN Bureau,

Hyderabad, Oct 17: In a strong show of solidarity, the Telangana Congress on Friday extended its support to the statewide BC JAC-led bandh on October 18, protesting the High Court's interim stay on the government's order granting 42% reservation to BCs in local body elections.

Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhathi Vikramarka called on citizens from all communities to actively participate in the bandh, describing it as a fight for social justice and a stand against political obstruction by the BJP. He urged Union Ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay, along with State BJP chief N. Ramchander

Rao, to take immediate steps to engage with the Prime Minister and President to secure approval for the BC Bill, underlining the national significance of the issue. BC JAC Chairman R. Krishnaiah appealed for support from political parties and civil society organisations to strengthen the movement. Telangana DGP

B. Shivadhar Reddy appealed for peaceful conduct during the bandh, warning that any unlawful activities would be met with strict action. The High Court, on October 9, had issued an interim stay on the government's 42% BC reservation order, intensifying political mobilisation in the state. Analysts say the bandh could set a

precedent for future mobilisation by caste-based organisations and highlight the challenges of implementing social justice policies amid judicial interventions. With political parties across the spectrum supporting the call, the bandh is shaping up as a test of both governance and civil cooperation in Telangana.

140 Maoists to Surrender Before Chhattisgarh CM

In an extraordinary development, 140 Maoist cadres, including top commanders, are scheduled to surrender before Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and Home Minister Vijay Sharma in Jagdalpur on Friday. Among them are CPI (Maoist) Central Committee member Takalapalli Vasudeva Rao alias Rupesh and DKZC Maad division in-charge Ranitha, whose surrender marks a significant blow to the Maoist movement in Bastar.



TPN Bureau,

Kothagudem, Oct 17: Rupesh, originally from Andhra Pradesh, recently elevated to the Central Committee, has been a key coordinator between DKZC divisions, managing logistics, training, and communications. Ranitha, a senior female commander, has commanded operations

across several Bastar districts. Analysts say their surrender could weaken Maoist operational capabilities and disrupt local command structures, potentially accelerating the decline of the insurgency in the region. The surrendering cadres, visibly exhausted from prolonged forest operations, crossed the Indravati river along

the Dantewada-Bijapur border. Social media has widely circulated videos showing the cadres marching in formation through dense forests, symbolising a significant shift from militancy to mainstream compliance. Alongside the top leaders, the surrender includes 2 DKZC members, 2 SZC members, 15 DVC

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Cabinet Feuds Push Congress to Seek High Command Intervention

TPN Bureau,

Hyderabad, Oct 17: Internal conflicts within the Telangana Congress government have intensified, forcing the party's high command to step in as governance appears to falter. Turf wars, caste-based tensions, protocol disputes, and surveillance concerns among ministers

have raised serious questions about administrative priorities, even as the government nears its two-year milestone. The controversy began with BC Welfare Minister Ponnampati Prabhakar allegedly body-shaming SC Welfare Minister Aduri Laxman Kumar, followed by caste-based confrontations involving Labour Minister G. Vivek Venkatswamy

(Mala community) and Laxman Kumar (Madiga community). Allegations of exclusion, public humiliation, and political manoeuvring have further deepened rifts within the Cabinet. Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu and Prabhakar are reportedly engaged in a power struggle for influence in the erstwhile Karimnagar district, while reports of

the Chief Minister's Office monitoring ministers' communications have created unease, prompting some to avoid using personal phones. The latest clash between Forest Minister Konda Surekha and Revenue Minister Ponguleti Srinivas Reddy over Medaram Jathara works and tender allocations has

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Harish Rao Criticism Sparks Political Debate in Telangana



TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: In a media interaction at Telangana Bhavan, former minister Harish Rao expressed sharp criticism of the state cabinet, claiming that the government has left citizens disappointed. Speaking after the recent cabinet meeting, Rao expressed expectations that the session would focus on people-centric policies, especially with the festive season around the corner. He

anticipated announcements such as farmer bonuses worth 1,300 crore, the launch of the Mahalakshmi scheme providing 2,500 for women, or even pension increments. However, he claimed none of these expectations were met. Rao accused ministers of focusing on personal power struggles rather than governance. He alleged that ministers are divided into multiple factions, clashing over commissions, contracts,

postings, and allocations, turning the cabinet into what he described as a “gang for personal gains” rather than a functional government. According to him, public welfare is being neglected, and administrative chaos has set in, undermining public confidence. Highlighting past achievements of the Telangana government under K. Chandrashekar Rao, he stressed that 95%

local reservation in employment and facilitation of TSI-PASS approvals had created an investor-friendly environment, yet, he claimed, the current administration’s approach has discouraged businesses and investors. Rao further alleged that ministers’ mismanagement of contracts, commissions, and misuse of authority has stalled industrial growth, turning previously thriving sectors into zones of fear and

corruption. He demanded a thorough inquiry, including the possibility of an independent judicial commission, to expose alleged irregularities. Rao’s comments were intended to highlight what he perceives as widespread administrative failures, contrasting current governance with prior achievements in infrastructure, industrial investment, and welfare schemes.



Gun Culture Started With BRS: Seethakka Fires Back On Harish

TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: Responding sharply to Harish Rao’s claims, Panchayat Raj and Women & Child Welfare Minister Dr. Danasari Anasuya Seethakka refuted the allegations as completely false. Speaking to media at MLA Quarters, she clarified that the cabinet meeting focused entirely on developmental issues, public welfare schemes, and addressing citizen grievances. “Not a single word of Rao’s statement holds truth. The discussion was orderly, professional, and centered on

people’s welfare,” Seethakka said. Seethakka criticized Rao for attempting to mislead the public and misrepresent government functioning. She pointed out that the previous KCR administration restricted ministers’ autonomy, likening them to “caged birds,” while the current government under CM Revanth Reddy has fostered an open environment with regular cabinet meetings every 15 days. She emphasized that the government is actively working to address citizens’ issues rather than creating chaos, as Rao alleged.

Highlighting instances of past corruption and misgovernance, Seethakka reminded the media that during previous regimes, incidents like violent real estate disputes and misappropriation of public funds occurred under Rao’s constituency. She accused BRS of perpetuating a “gun culture” and using false narratives to distract from administrative lapses. Seethakka concluded by reaffirming the government’s commitment to transparency, accountability, and citizen-centric governance.



Naveen Yadav Files Nomination, Congress Rallies for Victory

TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: Congress candidate Naveen Yadav submitted his nomination for the Jubilee Hills by-election at the SHAKEPET MRO office, joined by prominent leaders including Minister Ponnampati Prabhakar, Mayor Gaddwal Vijayalakshmi, and sen-

ior party figures. The Congress has called upon residents to vote in favor of Yadav on November 11, emphasizing his developmental agenda and public service record. The campaign highlights achievements under the current Congress government, such as improved drainage, road projects,

clean drinking water, ration card distribution, subsidized electricity and gas, and free bus services for women. The government has also facilitated interest-free loans for women and focused on uplifting marginalized communities. Naveen Yadav’s campaign portrays him as a candidate commit-

ted to transparency, development, and public welfare, contrasting with the BRS’s alleged neglect of Jubilee Hills over the past decade. Citizens are urged to strengthen democracy by voting for progress and ensuring local governance prioritizes the needs of every constituency member.

Congress leader backs govt amid row over Konda’s former OSD arrest attempt

TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: Amid a political storm in Telangana over the attempt to arrest Minister Konda Surekha, Congress leader and MLA from Waradhana constituency KR Nagaraj said on Thursday that the government would act if any wrongdoing was found, asserting that the minister must cooperate with the authorities in the investigation.

Konda Surekha and her daughter Konda Sushmita reached the MLA Quarters in Hyderabad to meet Telangana AICC in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan. Tensions erupted within the Telangana Congress after the police reportedly attempted to arrest N. Sumanth, who has served as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Minister Konda Surekha. On the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, police allegedly tried to arrest Sumanth, leading to a chaotic scene outside Surekha’s residence. Surekha’s daughter, Konda Sushmita, intervened and prevented the arrest, accusing the Chief Minister’s office of targeting her mother as part of a political vendetta. Speaking to the media, Sushmita said, “The state government is tar-

geting my mother and father. My mother is a minister, and look how they’re treating us. We don’t understand what we’ve done wrong. There are murder attempts on us, and this is a murder attempt. A lady constable came here, and I’m not sure if she was an SI or CI. They’re not just going after BRS; they’re targeting our residence and our women.” Sumanth’s contract, which was valid until December 2025, was terminated amid allegations of corruption, fueling speculation of a rift within the party. Sushmita claimed that Sumanth was removed from his post without explanation and that the police officers attempted to arrest him without an arrest warrant. “Our OSD, Sumanth, was terminated yesterday without any expla-

nation. The police came here saying Sumanth was in our house, but they didn’t have an arrest warrant. They came in mufti, and I told the Task Force CI to bring a warrant if they wanted to take him,” she said. “We’ve received information that Jubilee Hills police are on their way here. Sumanth is not a politician, and he doesn’t hold any position. We haven’t spoken about his termination,” she added. Taking a swipe at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Sushmita said, “Rahul Gandhi is shouting about BCs, but here, all the Reddys are trampling BCs. We received information about Sumanth’s termination, and now they’re alleging that he threatened someone with a pistol. I don’t know where the pistol is.”

Congress Flags Fake News Campaign Against Naveen Yadav



TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: TPCC spokesperson Syed Nizamuddin accused the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) of spreading fake news to defame Congress candidate Naveen Yadav in the Jubilee Hills Assembly by-election. He alleged that BRS circulated fabricated clips and articles, falsely claiming objectionable remarks by Yadav to mislead voters, particularly targeting the Muslim community. Nizamuddin stated that this attempt by BRS reflects desperation as Naveen Yadav has generated unprecedented public support in the constituency. The fake news

reportedly mimicked the format of leading Telugu newspapers to appear authentic, aiming to confuse voters and undermine Yadav’s growing popularity. He emphasized that Congress would formally approach Cyber Crime authorities, demanding action against those who conceived, funded, and disseminated the false content. Citizens were urged to remain vigilant, verify information, and not succumb to the BRS misinformation campaign. Nizamuddin expressed confidence that Naveen Yadav would win with a record majority, emphasizing Congress’ commitment to clean, truth-driven politics.

Liquor License Rush: Thousands of Applications Flood Telangana

TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: Telangana is witnessing an unprecedented surge in applications for liquor shop licenses, with thousands of entrepreneurs vying for permissions before the final submission date of October 18. Officials report that the state's excise departments are dealing with an overwhelming volume of applicants, reflecting both economic opportunity and growing demand in urban and semi-urban areas. In Hyderabad's Secunderabad and Hyderabad divisions, 11 excise stations are processing applications for 179 shops, with 1,809 submissions already received by Friday evening. Ranga Reddy division alone has recorded around 10,000 applications, indicating the scale of interest among business owners. Across the state, nearly 15,000 applications had been submitted by Friday afternoon, and estimates suggest

the number could rise to 20,000–25,000 by the evening of the last day. Deputy Commissioner of Excise Anil Kumar Reddy stated that special arrangements have been made to manage the inflow of applicants, including parking facilities, dedicated counters, and additional staff. "We are expecting a heavy rush on the final day. To ensure smooth processing and avoid delays, applicants are advised to plan their visits in advance," he said. The high demand for licenses can be attributed to multiple factors. Telangana has seen growth in consumer spending, tourism, and hospitality, making retail liquor outlets a lucrative business. Moreover, the state government's regulatory framework is designed to balance revenue generation with responsible alcohol sale, which attracts serious business

investors. While the rush demonstrates entrepreneurial enthusiasm, authorities are also vigilant about preventing fraudulent applications, underlining that the excise department will conduct thorough verification of applicants' credentials. Additionally, public awareness campaigns have been launched to ensure transparency in license distribution, while encouraging citizens to report irregularities. Experts note that such surges can strain administrative capacity, but Telangana's proactive measures—including online pre-registration, extended working hours, and real-time tracking of applications—are helping ensure fairness and efficiency. This event also highlights the potential of regulated business licenses to boost local economies while maintaining social accountability.

Massive Fire at Crown Polymers Raises Industrial Safety Alarms

TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: A severe fire erupted at Crown Polymers in the Doolapally Industrial Area late Thursday night, raising urgent questions about fire safety and regulatory compliance. The facility, spanning three floors, was engulfed in flames due to a reported short circuit. Firefighters battled the blaze for ten hours using five fire engines, a Robo Mission unit, and support from DRF teams and local police. Fortunately, no casualties were reported. Investigations suggest the absence of adequate fire safety measures and lax inspections contributed to the severity of the incident. Local residents and industry workers pointed out that the factory operated without proper fire compliance certifications, with only nominal permits in place.

Officials have been criticized for insufficient oversight, with locals questioning whether accountability would be enforced. Industrial safety experts highlight that this fire is symptomatic of broader challenges in Hyderabad's industrial zones, where rapid industrialization sometimes outpaces regulatory enforcement. Proper fire prevention, regular inspections, emergency drills, and equipment maintenance are essential to mitigate risks. Authorities have assured a detailed inquiry into the incident, emphasizing the need for stricter enforcement of fire safety norms across all industrial units. Residents hope the incident will serve as a wake-up call, compelling both companies and regulators to prioritize safety over shortcuts.

HYDRAA Reclaims 1.3 Acres in Kulsumpura for Public Housing



TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: In a significant step to protect government land and promote affordable housing, HYDRAA authorities reclaimed 1.3 acres of encroached property in Kulsumpura village, Goshamahal constituency. The land, valued at over Rs. 110 crore, had been illegally occupied by a private individual, Ashok Singh, who reportedly rented out sheds on the property for commercial purposes.

The reclaimed land is earmarked for constructing double-bedroom homes for economically weaker sections, addressing the acute shortage of affordable housing in Kulsumpura, where vacant plots are scarce. The initiative aligns with the government's broader urban housing policies, aiming to balance heritage preservation, urban development, and social welfare. Authorities, including Hyderabad Municipal and Revenue officials, conducted multiple field inspections and coordinated with local residents who had lodged complaints. Previous attempts to reclaim the land had been thwarted, but the City Civil Court upheld the government's claim, reinforcing public interest as a priority. Commissioner of HYDRAA, under whose directions the clearance was executed, emphasized the importance of safeguarding public resources for societal benefit. Officials clarified that the land would be developed systematically, with appropriate planning, infrastructure, and amenities for future residents. Local residents welcomed the action, noting that encroachments often disrupt urban planning, degrade neighborhoods, and reduce public access to essential services. Experts point out that reclaiming government land not only prevents unlawful occupation but also ensures resources are utilized to meet pressing urban housing needs. This development is part of a larger urban strategy in Hyderabad to balance growth with equity, ensuring that marginalized populations have access to safe and affordable housing while curbing illegal property practices.



TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: Hyderabad's newly appointed City Police Commissioner, Sri V.C. Sajjanar, IPS, visited the historic Kotwal House at Purani Haveli on Friday, marking a renewed emphasis on citizen engagement and community policing. This visit underscores the department's commitment to making law enforcement more accessible and responsive, especially in the Old City, which has long

been a densely populated and historically significant area of Hyderabad. The Kotwal House, which served as the Hyderabad City Police headquarters from 1920 to 2002, has recently been restored, preserving its architectural heritage while repurposing it for citizen interaction. Commissioner Sajjanar toured the premises, inspecting the facilities and interacting directly with citizens and com-

plainants. Residents brought a variety of issues to his attention, ranging from petty crimes to public safety concerns, and he promptly issued instructions to relevant officers for immediate resolution. Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Sajjanar said, "Kotwal House is not just a building; it is a part of Hyderabad's policing legacy. By reopening it for public interaction, we are merging tradition with modern policing. Citizens must feel safe and confident that their voices are heard." He further announced that he would personally be available at Kotwal House every Friday to meet residents of the Old City. "This initiative is designed to create a direct channel of communication between citizens and law enforcement. We aim to address grievances promptly, resolve conflicts, and maintain peace. The Police Department remains committed to upholding law and order across Hyderabad, and we urge the public to cooperate and actively participate in our joint effort to create a safe and crime-free city," he added. Senior officials including Smt. K. Apoorva Rao, IPS (DCP Special Branch), Smt. Sneha Mehra, IPS (DCP South Zone), and other officers were present during the visit, highlighting the department's collective commitment to citizen-friendly policing. Experts in urban governance note that community policing programs like this are critical for improving trust between residents and law enforcement. By leveraging historic spaces such as Kotwal House, the city sends a strong signal about valuing heritage while prioritizing public service. Residents have welcomed the move, expressing optimism that this hands-on engagement could lead to quicker redressal of complaints and a noticeable reduction in petty crime. The initiative also includes plans for citizen awareness programs, legal aid camps, and workshops on personal safety. By integrating tradition, accessibility, and technology, Hyderabad is setting a benchmark for other cities in India to strengthen community policing while honoring historic landmarks.

Starla Jewels Unveils Its Second Flagship Store in Gachibowli, Hyderabad



TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: India Starla Jewels, India's leading attainable-luxury fine-jewellery brand, proudly announces the grand opening of its second flagship store in the Le Meridien Hotel building, Gachibowli, Hyderabad, on October 17, 2025. After the resounding success of its Jubilee Hills flagship, the new store marks a major milestone in Starla's mission to make fine jewellery an everyday celebration of beauty, emotion, and conscious craftsmanship. Starla Jewels will continue to focus on creating exquisite designs, building customer trust, and maintaining the highest quality at the best prices. The inauguration graced by Sanjana Somavarapu, acclaimed young author and poet and Starla's new Brand Ambassador, who will light the ceremonial lamp to mark the beginning of a new chapter in the brand's journey. Sanjana embodies Starla's philosophy of confidence, creativity, and modern grace interlaced with tradition — values that resonate deeply with today's generation of women. Designed as an immersive experience

in Starla's signature palette of translucent burgundy, powder pink, and soft peach, the Gachibowli flagship features Starla's latest collections of lab-grown diamond solitaires, everyday fine jewellery, and bespoke bridal pieces. "At Starla, every creation begins with design that tells a story, an experience that stirs emotion and a standard of quality that endures," said Rekha Somavarapu, Co-Founder and Creative Director of Starla Jewels. "Our new Gachibowli flagship embodies these three pillars — thoughtful design, immersive experience, and uncompromising quality — while staying true to our belief that fine jewellery should be both ethical and attainable. Having Sanjana Somavarapu lead this moment brings our philosophy full circle — a young voice inspiring a new generation to express their stories, whether written in words or reflected through the brilliance of a diamond." To celebrate, Starla is offering 'Your First Diamond on Us,' 20% off on diamonds, 100% free old-gold exchange, gold coins and special launch-week experiences.

Cops Bust Inter-State Hash Oil Network



TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: Rachakonda Police, in collaboration with the Special Operations Team (SOT) and local units, successfully apprehended two individuals involved in transporting and selling hash oil across states. The suspects, hailing from Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, were part of an organized gang supplying narcotics in Hyderabad and surrounding areas. A minor was also reportedly involved. During the operation, authorities seized 5.1 kilograms of hash oil, valued at approximately Rs. 1.5 crore. Police Commissioner Sudheer Babu emphasized the department's

focus on preventing inter-state drug trafficking. "We are monitoring these networks closely. Those engaged in such criminal activity will face strict legal action. Public cooperation is vital in curbing drug circulation and creating a safe environment," he said. This operation highlights law enforcement's proactive approach to tackling organized crime and serves as a warning to traffickers exploiting state borders to distribute narcotics. Citizens are urged to report suspicious activities to authorities to prevent drug abuse and criminality.

Hyderabad Woman Duped Of Rs 35 Lakh By Fraudster Posing as London Doctor

TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: A 61-year-old Hyderabad resident became the victim of a sophisticated online scam, losing over Rs. 35 lakh to a fraudster impersonating a London-based doctor. Claiming to be Dr. Steve Rodrigues from South Manchester General Hospital, the scammer convinced her that her son had suffered a severe head injury at London Airport and required urgent treatment. Over two months, from August 8 to September 18, the victim made multiple online payments totaling Rs. 35,23,070. The fraudster denied providing any proof of the son's condition and subsequently deleted all chat histories, revealing the scam. Cybercrime authori-

ties issued an advisory urging citizens to verify claims through family members or official embassy channels before transferring money. The public has been advised to report cybercrime incidents promptly via the helpline (1939) or through the official website, www.cyber-crime.gov.in. This case underscores the growing sophistication of online scams targeting senior citizens and the urgent need for awareness, digital literacy, and vigilance in financial transactions. Experts recommend cross-verifying emergency claims, using official channels, and maintaining cautious skepticism regarding unsolicited communications.



Students Protest Closure of K. Venkanna Junior College

TPN Bureau | October 17
Qutubullapur: Students of K. Venkanna Junior College staged a protest after discovering the institution remained locked following Dasara holidays. The private college, operating in a rented building, failed to reopen, leaving approximately 180 students stranded. The building owner reportedly cited unpaid rent as the reason for locking the college, while students claim they were misled about the reopening. Attempts to contact the staff revealed short-circuit issues, but student leaders argue the real problem is financial mismanagement by the management.

“This is not just about buildings; it’s about our future being held hostage,” said student representatives. Leaders from ABVP and NSUI joined the protest, demanding strict action against the management for disrupting education and delaying syllabus coverage. Parents and local leaders also voiced concern over students losing valuable academic time. The incident underscores the vulnerability of students in privately managed educational institutions, highlighting the need for stronger regulatory oversight to protect student rights and ensure uninterrupted learning.

Lord Hanuman statue found broken in Keesara, police investigate

TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: A Lord Hanuman statue was found broken in Rampalli, located under the jurisdiction of Keesara Police Station in the Medchal-Malkajgiri district in Telangana, according to an official on Friday. The Police officials reached the site and have launched an investigation into the incident. “We received information about the incident, and our police officials reached the spot. We’re investigating the matter. We suspect that there might have been a crack in one of the hands of the Lord Hanuman statue, which may have caused it to break. We’re looking into the matter,” a Keesara police officer said. Authorities are examining the statue and the surrounding area to determine the cause of the damage and whether any foul play was involved. Further investigation is still ongoing.

Telangana issues tenders for rural roads worth Rs 6,294 crore



TPN Bureau | October 17
Hyderabad: The Telangana government has issued tenders for the construction of rural roads at a cost of Rs 6,294 crore under the Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM). The works are proposed to be taken up in 17 packages covering 2,162 roads spanning 7,449.50 km across 96 constituencies. Under the HAM model, 40 per cent of the project cost will be paid by the government during construction, while 60 per cent will be mobilised by contractors from banks. The contractors will also be responsible for maintaining the roads for 15 years after a 30-month construction period. Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Danasari Anasuya Seethakka said that the HAM project will significantly develop village roads and boost the rural economy. This flagship programme aims to transform rural roads and improve transportation infrastructure. The state government has taken up the ambitious project that involves the construction, upgradation, and maintenance of roads connecting Gram Panchayats (GPs) to mandal headquarters, mandal headquarters to district headquarters, and district headquarters to State headquarters. As part of the project, the State Cabinet on Thursday approved the proposal of the Roads and Buildings Department to issue tenders for the construction of roads of a total length of 5,566 km at a cost of Rs 10,547 crore under HAM. Roads and Buildings Minister Komatireddy Venkat Reddy said that the Chief Minister’s visionary leadership is steering Telangana’s roads towards revolutionary development. He thanked the Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his fellow cabinet ministers for approving the construction of roads. “We are moving forward with the resolve to construct smooth, mirror-like roads across the state in the coming 30 months and transform Telangana’s roads into a role model for the entire nation,” he said. The minister stated that the tender process for these works will commence within a week. “We are undertaking works in a total of 32 packages. In the first phase, we are taking steps to start work on 10 packages immediately. In the coming three years, every major highway in Telangana will stand as an exemplar to the nation in terms of quality, durability, and aesthetics,” he said.

Singareni Workers Get 400 Crore Bonus as BC Reservation Bill Gains Momentum

TPN Bureau | October 17
Khammam: Addressing the media at the Khammam Congress office, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka announced a Diwali bonus of 400 crore for Singareni coal workers, acknowledging their contribution to powering the nation. He extended festive greetings to the people of Telangana, wishing them prosperity and happiness. Speaking on the ongoing BC Reservation Bill, the Deputy CM urged all communities to participate in the statewide protest against BJP on October 18, emphasizing the party’s obstruction in implementing the 42% reservation promised to Other Backward Classes (OBCs). “The Congress government is committed to fulfilling its promise,” he asserted, noting the steps taken: comprehensive surveys, legislative approval, and submission to the Governor, despite delays from the central BJP government. Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka elaborated that the state cabinet had already taken decisions on BC reservations, including amendments to local body reservations and education sector quotas. Legal experts like Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Ravi Varma were appointed to ensure success in high court and Supreme Court cases regarding BC reservations. He highlighted the unity of opposition parties in supporting BC rights and criticized the central government for denying meetings with the President and Prime Minister. The Deputy CM concluded that once the Supreme Court verdict is received, the state cabinet will take a final decision on October 23, reinforcing the government’s commitment to social justice and inclusive governance.

Traffic Officers Educate Youth in Tribute to Fallen Heroes

TPN Bureau | October 17
Secunderabad: In a special awareness initiative commemorating Police Martyrs’ Remembrance Day, traffic officials organized a comprehensive program at the Begumpet Traffic Training Institute. Hundreds of students from local schools and colleges actively participated, gaining firsthand knowledge about traffic rules, the penalties for violations, and the technologies employed by modern traffic departments. The program highlighted practical demonstrations of traffic management tools, including traffic radar guns, laser cameras, body cameras, and the mechanisms behind challan generation. Participants observed how these devices help ensure safety on city roads, bridging the gap between theory and real-world enforcement. “This program was specially organized under the directives of senior officials to honor the valiant police personnel who laid down their lives while serving the public,” said TTI ACP Laxman. He emphasized that educating young citizens about traffic safety not only reduces accidents but also builds respect for law enforcement agencies. Officials also explained the importance of following traffic regulations to prevent accidents and fatalities, noting that road discipline is a shared responsibility between authorities and citizens. By exposing students to the tools and procedures that traffic personnel use daily, the program aimed to foster a culture of compliance, responsibility, and civic awareness. The initiative received an overwhelmingly positive response, with students expressing appreciation for learning practical aspects of traffic law enforcement. The event also reinforced the sacrifices of police martyrs, reminding participants of the courage and dedication required in maintaining public safety.





Empowering Lives Beyond Walls: The Case for Community-Based Rehabilitation



As India deepens its commitment to human rights and social inclusion, the rehabilitation of survivors of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation demands renewed attention. A growing body of evidence suggests that the country's long-standing dependence on institutional care—shelter homes, child care institutions, and aftercare facilities—has too often failed to deliver meaningful reintegration. Instead, advocates are calling for a shift toward non-institutional and community-based rehabilitation, an approach that restores dignity, autonomy, and belonging to some of the country's most marginalized women and children.

A recent national

study by the Bengaluru-based Enfold Proactive Health Trust, titled Empowerment and Rehabilitation of Women and Children in Shelter Homes, Aftercare, and Child Care Institutions, highlights the deep-seated challenges within institutional systems. It found that prolonged stays in shelter homes frequently lead to emotional isolation, social stigma, and difficulty adjusting to independent life. The report urges that institutionalization be used only as a last resort, emphasizing family and community-based care as a more sustainable alternative.

A Distressing Picture from Andhra Pradesh

In Andhra Pradesh, the survivor collective VIMUKTHI has carried out its own analysis

through a series of Right to Information (RTI) applications. The findings, compiled in a 2023 report, reveal striking gaps in the state's rehabilitation framework for rescued survivors of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

According to government data shared with VIMUKTHI, 2,737 survivors were housed in various shelter homes between 2019 and June 2023. Of these, 2,265 were accommodated in Ujjawala Homes, 447 in Swadhar Homes, and 25 in NGO-run facilities. Yet, despite this scale of institutional support, only 692 survivors formally applied for social entitlements or rehabilitation services—and just 592 actually received them. That means fewer than one in four survivors (22 percent) accessed the benefits and schemes designed for their recovery.

The report also found that many shelter home administrators still view institutionalization itself as the end goal of rehabilitation, rather than a temporary safety net. This mindset contradicts the very spirit of G.O. Ms. No. 1 (2003), issued by the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare (DWD-CW) for the explicit purpose of reintegrating rescued women into society through holistic, non-institutional meas-

ures. The policy, once active and effective, fell into disuse after the 2014 bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, leaving survivors adrift without proper follow-up or access to schemes.

Numbers That Tell a Deeper Story

The data paint a sobering picture of systemic neglect. Between 2016 and 2022, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reported 2,890 women and children rescued from trafficking across Andhra Pradesh. Yet, only five survivors—all from Machilipatnam in Krishna District—applied for compensation under the state's victim compensation scheme during 2022-23.

While over 12.14 crore in compensation funds were allocated across 12 districts, none of this was disbursed to trafficking survivors. Similarly, under G.O. Ms. No. 28, which mandates an immediate relief payment of 20,000 to each rescued victim, just 132 survivors—barely 4 percent of the total housed between 2019 and 2023—received the support.

VIMUKTHI's analysis suggests that lack of awareness, bureaucratic delays, and poor inter-departmental coordination have all contributed to this breakdown, undermining survivors' rights to justice and dignity.

Inside the Walls: The Human Cost of

Institutionalization

The Enfold study identifies several recurring problems across shelter homes and child care institutions nationwide. New entrants struggle to adjust to rigid routines after the chaos of exploitation, while those restored to their families often face difficulties re-adapting to life outside. The absence of trained counselors exacerbates widespread mental health issues—depression, anxiety, anger, and self-harm tendencies are alarmingly common.

Children and women with disabilities remain particularly marginalized due to the lack of inclusive infrastructure and skilled caregivers. Many residents also face

lescent girls and survivors of sexual violence, encounter moral policing within the homes themselves.

Educational and vocational barriers further limit prospects for independence. Inconsistent schooling, scarce certified training programs, and safety restrictions on mobility make reintegration nearly impossible. Financial and administrative delays, coupled with staff shortages and high attrition rates, compound these problems. The COVID-19 pandemic only worsened the crisis, disrupting rehabilitation programs and mental health services.

The Case for Community-Based

cost-effective. They focus on reintegrating survivors into family and community life, offering personalized care that addresses each individual's needs and aspirations. In India, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 already embraces this philosophy, emphasizing "non-institutional care" and prescribing alternatives such as foster care, adoption, sponsorships, and family-based placements.

Experts argue that CBR fosters stronger family and community bonds, reduces the psychological damage of institutionalization, and promotes independence through life-skills and vocational training. It is also more sustainable than maintaining large state-run facilities. Importantly, it aligns with global human-rights frameworks like the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), both of which endorse community reintegration as the preferred model of care.

Reimagining the Future

Advocates say the path forward must blend compassion with systemic reform. Governments and civil-society organizations need to collaborate on strengthening

family-based care, reviving G.O. Ms. No. 1 (2003), and expanding awareness about rehabilitation entitlements. Community networks and survivor-led groups such as VIMUKTHI can play a pivotal role in identifying survivors, linking them to social protection schemes, and preventing re-trafficking.

Investing in mental health support, education, and vocational training remains crucial for building long-term resilience. Training caregivers in trauma-informed practices and ensuring access to legal aid and victim compensation would bring the state closer to fulfilling its obligations under national and international law.

Beyond Walls

Non-institutional Community Based rehabilitation is more than a policy shift—it is a moral imperative. As the statistics from Andhra Pradesh reveal, institutional care alone cannot rebuild lives shattered by exploitation. What survivors need is not confinement but community; not dependency but empowerment.

By investing in community-based care and restoring faith in the state's commitment to justice, India can transform rehabilitation from a process of containment into one of true inclusion, dignity, and hope.



stigma from local schools and employers once their institutional background becomes known. Others, especially ado-

Rehabilitation

Globally, Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) models have proved both humane and

Senior IPS Officer's Suicide Sparks Debate on Service Challenges and Discrimination

A senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer recently committed suicide at his home, leaving behind a suicide note accusing colleagues and superiors of discriminatory, humiliating, and vengeful behavior. The officer alleged that he was denied rightful positions due to his Scheduled Caste (SC) background. His wife, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, publicly supported his claims, intensifying the political and media uproar. There are now calls for the officers named in the note to be arrested and prosecuted under all applicable laws.

While emotions run high, this incident invites a broader reflection on the realities faced by senior civil servants in India, particularly within the elite All India Services (AIS) like IAS and IPS.

The AIS represents the pinnacle of civil services in India, with thousands of aspirants competing annually for limited vacancies. Selection into these services immediately elevates one's social and economic status, often bringing prestige to the entire family. The jobs



come with significant perks—secure tenure, time-bound promotions, subsidized housing, official staff, and

land allotments—making mid-career exits rare.

Although officers from SC/ST communi-

ties sometimes face discrimination in subordinate ranks, promotions within the IAS and IPS are generally automa-

tic and based on seniority fixed at entry level through UPSC rankings. The system is designed to ensure equi-

table advancement regardless of caste, gender, or religion.

However, frustration

can arise due to the limited availability of top posts like Chief Secretary or Director General of Police in each

state. To address this, governments have created multiple additional positions by splitting departments, which sometimes leads officers to feel sidelined in less prestigious roles. This "miniaturization" of posts often dilutes responsibilities but provides career progression, a practice common across all communities.

Frequent transfers and postings to less significant roles affect many officers, not just those from marginalized backgrounds. Notable examples, such as IAS officer Ashok Khemka's multiple transfers, illustrate this challenge.

Despite the considerable stress associated with their roles—political pressures, workplace dynamics, and public scrutiny—IAS and IPS officers serve with dedication and commitment to nation-building.

While the tragic death of the officer is deeply saddening, it also calls for a deeper understanding of the systemic challenges and pressures faced by India's civil servants, beyond individual cases of discrimination or grievance.

BJP Names PM Modi, CMs, Celebrities as Star Campaigners for Bihar Polls



TPN Bureau | Patna
The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday released its list of 40 star campaigners for the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections, showcasing a powerful mix of senior leaders, regional influencers, and film celebrities.

Topping the list is Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose presence is expected to be a major draw across the state. Other key names include BJP national president J.P. Nadda, Union

Home Minister Amit Shah, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The list also features five Chief Ministers from BJP-ruled states, including Assam's Himanta Biswa Sarma, Maharashtra's Devendra Fadnavis, and Delhi BJP leader Rekha Gupta. Their inclusion signals the party's intent to target a wide voter base across caste and regional lines.

In a bid to appeal to the state's cultural sentiments, the BJP has again

brought in Bhojpuri cinema stars and sitting MPs Manoj Tiwari and Ravi Kishan, alongside singer-actor Pawan Singh. Their popularity among Bihar's youth and rural voters is seen as a key asset.

The inclusion of film personalities alongside heavyweight politicians reflects the BJP's campaign strategy of blending star power with political leadership to energize the electorate.

The BJP's campaign is expected to focus on de-

velopment, law and order, and national leadership under PM Modi, as it seeks to retain its influence in the politically significant state.

Bihar, known for its complex caste dynamics and high voter turnout, will see a multi-phase election later this year. With alliances forming and campaigns heating up, the BJP's early release of its star campaigners list signals the start of an aggressive election season.



New Gujarat Cabinet Sworn In

Harsh Sanghvi named Deputy CM, Rivaba Jadeja among new faces
TPN Correspondent | Delhi

In a major political reshuffle, Gujarat's newly reconstituted Cabinet under Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel was sworn in on Friday, with Harsh Sanghvi taking oath as the Deputy Chief Minister — the youngest to hold the position in the state's history.

The ceremony, held at Raj Bhavan in Gandhinagar, saw the induction of 21 new ministers following the mass resignation of the previous Cabinet

on Thursday, excluding the Chief Minister. With the latest appointments, the Cabinet now comprises 26 members, including the Chief Minister.

Union Minister and BJP national president J.P. Nadda attended the swearing-in, underlining the party's full backing for the reshuffled state leadership.

Among the notable new faces in the Cabinet is Rivaba Jadeja, the first-time MLA from Jamnagar North and wife of cricketer Ravindra Jadeja. Her inclusion signals the party's ef-

forts to strengthen its outreach among women and youth, while also appealing to the influential Rajput community.

Harsh Sanghvi, a rising star within the Bharatiya Janata Party, previously served as Minister of State for Home and earned praise for his handling of law and order issues. His elevation to Deputy CM reflects his growing stature in Gujarat politics and is seen as a move to energize the party's young leadership ahead of the 2027 Assembly polls.

The reshuffle comes

amid efforts to reset the governance agenda and bring in fresh political momentum as the BJP looks to consolidate its dominance in the state. While the move surprised many, party insiders see it as a strategy to pre-empt anti-incumbency and prepare the state leadership for the future.

With this new Cabinet, the BJP aims to project a more dynamic and inclusive leadership, aligned with its broader national strategy as Gujarat remains a key stronghold for the party.

‘Apple Invested Here, Not In Andhra’: Siddaramaiah Snaps Amid Investment Row



TPN Correspondent | Patna
Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah hit back Friday amid a growing spat with Andhra Pradesh over crumbling infrastructure and investment losses in Bengaluru, after tech giant Google confirmed a \$15 billion investment in Visakhapatnam (Vizag) for an AI and data hub.

Responding to Andhra Minister Nara Lokesh's jabs on social media, Siddaramaiah said, "Investors will invest where they want to," and reminded critics that Apple chose Karnataka over Andhra for major projects. "These posts (against Karnataka) are deliberate and politically motivated," he said, referring to online attacks on Bengaluru's infrastructure.

The war of words

escalated after Lokesh, in a post on X, said, "Karnataka is feeling the burn!" — following Google's announcement. Janata Dal (Secular) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy also took a dig, comparing the Congress-led Karnataka government unfavourably with Andhra's TDP regime.

The feud began in September after Rajesh Yabaji, co-founder of a Bengaluru-based logistics firm, criticised the city's traffic and poor road conditions. Lokesh offered Vizag as an alternative, sparking debate over the future of investment in Bengaluru. Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge responded sharply, accusing "weaker ecosystems" of trying to feed off stronger ones. He cit-

ed data projecting Bengaluru's GDP to grow at 8.5% annually until 2035 — potentially the fastest in the world.

Lokesh, unapologetic in interviews, claimed Andhra had secured over \$120 billion in investments and urged states like Karnataka to step up if they wanted to stay competitive.

Fueling the controversy, Biocon chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw's viral post about potholes and garbage in Bengaluru triggered more criticism of Karnataka's civic infrastructure, with some residents threatening to withhold property tax unless repairs are made.

With political jabs turning into a full-blown state rivalry, the South's battle for investment i

Indian Peacekeepers Earn Global Goodwill: President Murmu

TPN Correspondent | Delhi
President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday praised the commendable contribution of Indian peacekeepers to United Nations missions, highlighting their global reputation for professionalism, gender inclusion, and community engagement in conflict zones.

Speaking at the Army Chiefs' Conclave for UN Troop Contributing Countries at Rashtrapati Bhavan, President Murmu said Indian peacekeepers have carved "a special place for themselves" and earned "immense goodwill" among communities in strife-

torn regions.

"Indian peacekeepers have consistently upheld the highest standards of conduct and commitment, whether it's protecting civilians, rebuilding societies, or promoting gender equity," she said. The President noted India's growing role in advancing gender inclusion in UN missions, citing the deployment of all-women contingents as a step towards greater diversity and empowerment.

India is one of the largest and oldest contributors to UN peacekeeping operations, with over 2,75,000 Indian personnel having served in various missions since 1948. Currently, thousands of In-



dian troops serve in hotspots across Africa and Asia, contributing not just to security but also to humanitarian and development efforts.

President Murmu emphasised the broader impact of India's peace-

UN troop-contributing nations, focused on enhancing cooperation, sharing operational experiences, and addressing emerging challenges in global peacekeeping.

Murmu also reaffirmed India's commitment to multilateralism and its readiness to lead in reforms that make UN peacekeeping more effective and inclusive. The event underlined India's aspiration not just to participate in global peace efforts but to shape the future of peacekeeping through innovation, training, and diplomacy.

"India stands firm in its resolve to foster global peace and stability," the President concluded.

“Indian PM Likely To Be Leader Of Free World In 40-50 Years”: Tony Abbott

TPN Correspondent | Delhi
Former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott has predicted that India could emerge as the leader of the free world in the next four to five decades, overtaking the United States in global influence. Speaking at the NDTV World Summit 2025 on Friday, Abbott praised India's rise as a democratic superpower and called it a vital counterbalance to China's growing dominance.

"The 21st century belongs to India," Abbott said, highlighting the country's strategic advantages — democracy, the rule of law, and the



English language — as key assets in its ongoing economic and military rise. He added, "India is now the most populous

country, with massive infrastructure expansion. It can substitute China as the world's next industrial hub." Calling on In-

dia to embrace its role as a regional and global leader, Abbott urged Delhi to act as a "democratic counterweight" to China in the Asia-Pacific and a "strong, reliable partner" for Australia. He cited free trade agreements with Australia and the UK as signs of a global pivot away from China. Abbott also warned of China's ambitions to become a hegemonic power, noting that its aggressive stance on Taiwan could be a flashpoint. "Weakness is provocative," he said, urging democracies to make it clear that any Chinese incursion would face resistance. On global is-

ssues, Abbott criticized former US President Donald Trump's punitive tariffs on India, saying, "Trump misplayed his hand, especially when China, which imports more Russian oil, wasn't penalised the same way."

He also criticized past US policy for favouring Pakistan — "a military dictatorship" — over democratic India during the Cold War. "The future of freedom depends on nations like India stepping up," Abbott concluded, calling for stronger global alliances led by democratic powers.

Yunus Urges Unity as Bangladesh Parties Prepare to Sign July Charter



TPN Bureau | Dhaka

Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus has called on all political parties in Bangladesh to come together and sign the July National Charter 2025, a consensus document aimed at restoring democratic governance following last year's political upheaval.

The charter, prepared by the National Consensus Commission — a seven-member body formed by the Yunus-led interim government in February — will be signed at a public ceremony at the South Plaza of the National Parliament building on Friday evening. Major parties, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), are expected to participate, although BNP's acting chairman Tarique Rahman will not attend, and chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia may skip the event due to health concerns.

However, the National Citizen Party (NCP), a key political force that emerged after Sheikh Hasina's fall from power, has refused to sign the charter, claiming it lacks legal

legitimacy. "This will remain confined only to formality," the party said in a statement, calling for legal foundations and public endorsement through a referendum before it commits.

Despite Yunus' last-minute appeal for unity, NCP and some leftist parties have chosen to wait for a revised draft. The commission has clarified that those unwilling to sign now may do so later.

Cultural Affairs Adviser Mostofa Sarwar Farooki described the event as the beginning of a "festive election journey," aimed at showcasing how the charter will reshape the nation's future.

Meanwhile, controversy continues over a potential referendum. While Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh demands one before elections, BNP has opposed the idea, insisting polls must come first.

"This is our moment of pride and hope," Yunus said on X, urging all Bangladeshis to witness the ceremony live and celebrate the spirit of unity despite political, religious, and ethnic differences.

Pakistan Open to Talks with Afghanistan If Conditions Met: PM Shehbaz



TPN Correspondent | Islamabad

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Pakistan is ready for dialogue with Afghanistan if the Taliban-led government in Kabul meets Islamabad's "justified" conditions, amid a fragile ceasefire following deadly cross-border clashes.

Speaking to the federal cabinet on Thursday, the prime minister stated, "The ball is in their court. If they want to fulfil our justified conditions through talks, then we are ready." His remarks come a day after both countries agreed to a temporary 48-hour ceasefire starting at 6 pm on October 15, following escalating hostilities along the border.

The ceasefire, requested by the Afghan Taliban and confirmed by Pakistan's Foreign Office, aims to prevent further conflict after recent violence claimed lives on both sides. PM Shehbaz warned, however, that if the ceasefire was "only done to buy time," Pakistan would not accept it.

He also emphasized the need for the elimi-

nation of extremist elements — referred to as "Fitna al-Khawarij" — from Afghan soil to ensure terrorists can no longer use Afghanistan to target Pakistan.

Highlighting diplomatic efforts, Shehbaz acknowledged Qatar's role in easing tensions and noted that Pakistani officials had made multiple attempts to hold peaceful discussions in Kabul, but with little success.

He praised the response of the Pakistani armed forces and Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir during the clashes, calling their actions "necessary" given the toll from terrorism.

On international developments, the prime minister also welcomed the ceasefire efforts in Gaza, thanking global and regional leaders for their roles. He reaffirmed Pakistan's support for Palestinian statehood.

Shehbaz concluded by lauding the recent staff-level agreement with the IMF and urged Pakistan to strive for economic independence, stating, "This should be the last programme we enter with the IMF."

Madagascar Coup Leader Sworn in as President Amid Global Condemnation

TPN Correspondent | ANTANANARIVO

Colonel Michael Randrianirina, commander of Madagascar's elite CAPSAT military unit, was officially sworn in as the country's new President on Friday, just days after leading a military coup that ousted the democratically elected government.

The swift takeover, announced only three days earlier, culminated in a formal swearing-in ceremony at the High Constitutional Court in the capital, Antananarivo. Randrianirina took the oath of office before the court's nine red-robed judges, marking the final step in a power grab that has drawn widespread international condemnation.

The coup followed three weeks of mounting anti-government protests, largely driven by young demonstrators frustrated with soaring unemployment, inflation, and alleged corruption. Tensions escalated sharply this week as military forces moved in, forcing the now-former President to flee the country and go into hiding.

The United Nations has strongly condemned the military takeover, calling for a return to constitutional order and urging the protection of civilian rights. In response to the coup, the African Union has suspended Madagascar from all activities until democratic governance is restored.

Randrianirina has yet to announce a clear political roadmap or timeline for



elections, raising concerns about the stability and future of democratic institutions in the Indian Ocean nation of 30 million. In his first address, he pledged to "restore national unity and security," but did not clarify the role the military

would play in the interim government.

Observers fear the takeover could spark further unrest and isolate Madagascar diplomatically and economically. The nation has a turbulent history of coups, with this being the second mili-

tary seizure of power in just over a decade.

The international community is now watching closely, urging restraint and a swift return to civilian-led governance.

Bright lights, big city: Diwali's festive spirit takes over London

TPN Correspondent | London

London embraced the spirit of Diwali with grandeur and inclusivity this year, as Trafalgar Square transformed into a vibrant hub for the city's official Festival of Lights celebration, "Diwali on the Square," held on October 12.

Against the backdrop of crisp autumn air, the square came alive with music, dance, and the colours of Indian tradition. From a 200-member dance troupe to sari-tying and yoga workshops, the event showcased the richness of Hindu, Sikh, and Jain cultures. A children's zone and South Asian vegan and vegetarian food stalls made it a family-friendly affair.

Mayor Sadiq Khan hailed the festival as a symbol of unity: "Diwali is a celebration of light overcoming darkness, hope overcoming hardship, and unity in our diversity."

The celebration extended beyond Trafalgar Square. At Knightsbridge, iconic department store Harrods collaborated with British-Indian artist Natasha Kumar for a Diwali-themed light installation, marking a first for the luxury retailer. "To illuminate this iconic London landmark for Diwali is a very special moment," said Harrods' creative director Alexander Wells-Greco.

Across London, the festive spirit was visible in boutique windows, floating floral installations in Canary Wharf, and diya-lined courtyards in the City. Soho restaurants like Fatt Pundit and Dishoom hosted Diwali specials, blending traditional rituals with modern flair.



Diwali even lit up Downing Street, continuing a tradition started by former PM Rishi Sunak, the UK's first leader of Indian heritage, who celebrated Diwali

inside No. 10 with diyas and sweets.

From marigolds in Covent Garden to kathak dancers in Devonshire Square, Diwali is no longer a niche festival—it

has become an integral part of London's cultural calendar. As one child put it while leaving Trafalgar Square, "It's like London has its own Diwali now."

Iran Condemns Israeli Strikes in Lebanon as Ceasefire Violation

TPN Correspondent | Tehran

Iran on Friday strongly condemned Israel's recent airstrikes in southern Lebanon, labelling them a "blatant violation" of Lebanese sovereignty and a breach of the ongoing ceasefire.

The condemnation came after an Israeli airstrike hit the southern Lebanese village of Ansar on Thursday, killing one person and injuring seven others. The attack targeted a cement plant in a region known to be a stronghold of Hezbollah, Iran's close ally in the region.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei sharply criticized the assault, saying, "These repeated attacks reflect Israel's aggressive nature and its disregard for international law and agreements." He urged the international community and the United Nations to take immediate action to stop what he called Israel's "escalatory behaviour."

The Israeli military confirmed the strike, stating it had targeted Hezbollah and affiliated militant groups in response to cross-border threats. Tensions along the Israel-Lebanon border have remained high, despite international efforts to maintain a fragile ceasefire in place since earlier this year.

The incident marks yet another flashpoint in the already volatile Middle East region, with concerns rising about further escalation. Hezbollah has yet to officially respond to the strike, but local media reported increased military readiness in southern Lebanon.



Lebanese officials have also condemned the attack, calling it an unjustified aggression that undermines peace and stability in the region. The Lebanese Foreign Ministry has appealed to the

United Nations to intervene and ensure Israel respects its international commitments.

As regional powers exchange accusations, fears grow that continued skir-

mishes could spiral into broader conflict. Iran's strong rhetoric signals a warning to Israel and its allies, amid growing uncertainty over the long-term sustainability of the ceasefire.

Coca-Cola Considers \$1 Billion IPO for Indian Bottling Unit



Coca-Cola Co. is reportedly exploring a potential \$1 billion initial public offering (IPO) of its Indian bottling operations, in a move that could bring one of the world's most iconic brands to India's booming stock market.

According to sources familiar with the matter, the US beverage giant is in early discussions with financial advisors about listing its Indian bottling subsidiary, Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages (HCCB), on domestic exchanges. While the final decision is yet to be made, the IPO could take

place as early as 2026, subject to market conditions and regulatory approvals.

The proposed IPO would mark Coca-Cola's first significant listing in India and could significantly boost its brand presence in one of its fastest-growing markets. The company has been ramping up investments in India to expand its distribution, increase local manufacturing, and respond to rising demand for both carbonated and non-carbonated beverages.

If it proceeds, the \$1 billion offering would make HCCB one of the largest FMCG listings in India in recent years and could attract major institutional and retail interest. The deal would also coincide with a record-setting year for India's IPO market, which has already seen several high-profile listings and strong investor appetite in 2025.

Hindustan Coca-Cola Beverages handles the manufacturing, packaging, sale, and distribution of Coca-Cola beverages in most parts of India and plays a critical

role in the company's supply chain strategy.

The potential listing could serve multiple purposes — including unlocking value, raising capital for expansion, and aligning with Coca-Cola's global strategy of streamlining operations and empowering local units.

India's stock markets have remained resilient despite global headwinds, making it an attractive venue for global corporations seeking growth and exposure to a rapidly expanding consumer base.

Markets Rebound on Foreign Fund Inflows, Fed Rate Cut Hopes



Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded sharply on Friday morning, recovering early losses amid continued foreign fund inflows and renewed optimism around potential interest rate cuts by the U.S. Federal Reserve.

The BSE Sensex, which opened on a weak note and dropped 261.58 points in early trade to hit 83,206.08, staged a recovery as investor sentiment improved. Similarly, the NSE Nifty initially declined by 76.7 points to 25,508.60 but soon regained lost ground, trading in the green later in the session.

Analysts attributed the rebound to increased foreign institutional investor (FII) activity, with global

investors showing confidence in Indian equities amid expectations that the U.S. Fed may shift toward a more accommodative policy stance in the coming months. This comes after mixed economic signals from the U.S., raising hopes of rate cuts in early 2026.

"Market volatility remains, but foreign inflows and global central bank cues are key drivers," said a senior market analyst. "Investors are watching Fed signals closely as any shift in rate expectations can significantly impact emerging markets like India."

In the broader Asian region, South Korea's Kospi was trading in positive territory, showing resilience,

while other key indices like Japan's Nikkei 225, Hong Kong's Hang Seng, and Shanghai's SSE Composite Index were in the red, reflecting mixed sentiment across the continent.

Back home, sectors such as banking, IT, and consumer goods led the recovery, supported by positive domestic macroeconomic data and robust corporate earnings.

Despite global uncertainties, Indian markets appear to be drawing strength from strong fundamentals and foreign interest, positioning them favorably heading into the final quarter of 2025. Investors are expected to remain cautious but optimistic as global cues unfold.

Zepto Raises \$450 Million, Valuation Jumps to \$7 Billion



Quick commerce startup Zepto has raised \$450 million in its latest funding round, pushing its valuation to a remarkable \$7 billion, the company announced on Friday. The fresh capital infusion strengthens Zepto's financial position and reinforces investor confidence in the company's rapid growth trajectory.

Aadit Palicha, CEO and Co-Founder of Zepto, confirmed the development, stating, "We now have approximately \$900 million of net cash in the bank and are more than well-capitalised for the future."

He emphasized that the funding will be used to deepen market presence, enhance supply chain infrastructure, and drive profitability.

This marks one of the largest funding rounds in India's startup ecosystem this year, especially in the quick commerce space — a sector that has seen intense competition and consolidation. Zepto, known for its 10-minute delivery model, has rapidly expanded across major Indian cities, offering groceries, daily essentials, and ready-to-eat items.

While Palicha did not disclose the investors

involved in the latest round, sources indicate participation from both existing and new global investors, reflecting strong belief in the long-term potential of India's fast-growing quick commerce segment.

Zepto's latest raise comes at a time when many startups are struggling to secure capital amid a tighter funding environment. However, the company's focus on operational efficiency, customer experience, and hyper-local execution has helped it maintain investor interest.

Industry experts view Zepto's \$7 billion valuation as a strong signal of market leadership. With the fresh funds and strong balance sheet, Zepto is well-positioned to scale further, potentially eyeing an IPO in the coming years as it continues to disrupt traditional retail with technology-driven delivery solutions.



LIC Increases Stake in Dr. Reddy's to Over 10%

State-owned insurance giant Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) has increased its stake in pharmaceutical major Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, crossing the 10% ownership mark. According to a regulatory filing by the company, LIC acquired over 1.71 crore shares through open market purchases over the past few months.

The additional acquisition translates to a 2.05% increase in LIC's holding, taking its total stake from 8.21% in early June to 10.26% as of October 15. The insurer purchased 1,71,40,819 shares during this period, underscoring its growing confidence in the Hyderabad-based drug manufacturer.

LIC, one of India's largest institutional investors, frequently holds significant stakes in key Indian companies. The increased investment in Dr. Reddy's comes at a time when the pharmaceutical sector is showing signs of stability and growth, buoyed by steady demand for generic drugs, strong export performance, and strategic product launches.

Dr. Reddy's, known for its presence in both domestic and international markets, has reported steady earnings in recent quarters. Analysts suggest LIC's move reflects long-term institutional confidence in the company's fundamentals, research capabilities, and future growth prospects.

Market experts view this development as a positive signal for investors. "LIC's increased holding in Dr. Reddy's reinforces institutional trust in the pharma sector and the company's business model," said a senior market strategist.

The acquisition comes amid a broader trend of rising institutional interest in pharma stocks, driven by expectations of consistent earnings, product pipeline expansion, and regulatory approvals in key markets such as the U.S. and Europe.

Dr. Reddy's stock could see increased investor interest following LIC's disclosure, potentially supporting its valuation in upcoming trading sessions.



Wipro Posts Muted Q2 Profit Growth at 3,246 Crore

IT services major Wipro Ltd reported a subdued performance for the July–September quarter, with net profit inching up to 3,246 crore — a marginal rise from 3,208 crore recorded in the same period last year.

The Azim Premji-promoted firm saw a modest 1.7% year-on-year increase in revenue from operations, which stood at 22,697.3 crore compared to 22,301 crore in Q2 FY24. However, its

core information technology (IT) services revenue came in at \$2.6 billion, marking a slight 0.7% sequential growth but a 2.1% decline year-on-year.

CEO and Managing Director Thierry Delaporte noted persistent global economic challenges, while CEO-designate Srinivas Pallia highlighted sectoral headwinds. "Tariff uncertainties continue to

impact key sectors such as consumer, energy, and manufacturing, leading clients to re-evaluate and realign their supply chains," Pallia said.

Despite the muted topline and bottom-line figures, the company reported strong deal momentum. Wipro secured total contract wins worth \$4.7 billion during the quarter, with 13 large deals contributing \$2.9 billion — a sign of continued client trust in

Wipro's long-term digital transformation capabilities.

Market analysts attribute the soft numbers to prolonged decision-making cycles and spending caution among global clients, particularly in Europe and North America. However, the healthy deal pipeline and focus on operational efficiencies are expected to support growth in upcoming quarters.

Wipro's leadership

transition also remains in focus, as Pallia prepares to take over the reins in a challenging macroeconomic environment.

With global uncertainties continuing to influence tech spending patterns, Wipro's cautious yet steady performance reflects the broader industry sentiment, as peers also report varied results in a volatile market landscape.

IRCTC Website Crashes Amid Diwali, Chhath Tatkal Booking Rush



Thousands of passengers were left frustrated on Friday morning as the IRCTC website went down during the peak Tatkal booking window ahead of Diwali and Chhath Puja. As booking for Tatkal tickets opened, the site became unresponsive, leaving users unable to secure tickets during one of the busiest travel periods of the year.

A notice displayed on the IRCTC website read: "The server is currently unavailable due to an influx of service requests." The outage began around 10 AM, coinciding with a surge in login and booking attempts, as reported by real-time outage tracker Downtdetector. A significant spike in complaints was registered during this time, indicating a major system overload.

This is not an isolated incident—IRCTC has faced similar breakdowns in the past, with three major outages reported during the 2024 holiday season. However, the

timing of the current crash, just before Dhanteras and during high-demand Tatkal hours, has caused widespread outrage among travelers.

Social media users were quick to voice their frustration. One user on X (formerly Twitter) posted, "Once again, IRCTC servers down during Tatkal booking right in the middle of Diwali. Railways deserve better tech for the world's largest passenger network." Another user wrote, "This happens every festival. Please upgrade your server capacity!"

With the festive season rush at its peak, IRCTC is under renewed pressure to address recurring technical failures. Despite being the backbone of India's passenger rail system, the platform continues to struggle with high-volume traffic during key travel windows.

Railway officials have yet to release an official statement regarding the outage or when full service will be restored.

Aliens May Have Stopped Contacting Humans Out of Boredom: NASA Scientist



In a fascinating and unconventional theory, Dr. Robin Corbet, a senior research scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, suggests that extraterrestrial civilizations might have simply lost interest in trying to contact humanity.

The theory, proposed in his recent paper titled "A Less Terrifying Universe? Mundanity as an Explanation for the Fermi Paradox," explores the idea that aliens might be only marginally more advanced than us — and possibly bored or unmotivated to initiate or maintain contact.

The Fermi Paradox — which questions why we haven't yet encountered intelligent alien life despite the vastness of the universe — serves as the basis for Corbet's proposal. Rather than imagining hyper-advanced civilizations with reality-bending technology, Corbet leans on the principle of "radical mundanity," suggesting that alien life, if it exists, might be more ordinary than we

expect. "They don't have faster-than-light travel or black hole-based machines. It's more like they have an iPhone 42 while we're on iPhone 17," Dr. Corbet told The Guardian. "They might be advanced, but not incomprehensibly so."

In the paper, which is yet to undergo peer review, Corbet argues that alien civilizations may lack the technological means or even the motivation to engage in high-energy communication that could take millions or billions of years to yield a response — a process that could understandably become tedious.

Rather than a terrifying silence caused by non-existence or hostile intent, Corbet's theory presents a universe that's "less terrifying" — just more mundane. He concludes that if we ever do make contact, the result might not be the awe-inspiring event we expect, but rather a slightly underwhelming exchange with civilizations not so different from our own.

“Flour Cheaper Than Wheat?” Viral Dmart Video Sparks Online

A viral video showing a bizarre price difference between wheat and flour at a Dmart store has left the internet both amused and puzzled. In the clip, a shopper points out that while wheat is priced at ₹37.50 per kg, flour (atta) is being sold for just ₹32 per kg — a contradiction that sparked an avalanche of online reactions.

The video, originally posted with the caption "Aata Gehu se sasta kaise ho gaya?" (How did flour become cheaper than wheat?), shows two price boards in the store — one for wheat and one for flour. The visibly confused customer pans the camera from the boards to his own baffled expression, making it a hilarious moment for viewers.

The post has since gone viral across social media platforms, drawing thousands of likes, shares, and comments. While many users laughed at the irony, others jumped in to explain the price difference.

One user commented, "This is the secret of business!" while another explained, "There are different varieties of wheat. Some like Lokwan or Sharbati are more expensive. Atta is often made from mixed or lower-grade wheat, hence the price difference."

Another user added, "You may know atta and gehu, but not the quality types. Market atta is often mass-



produced and treated with pesticides. Not all wheat is the same."

While the humorous video offered some comic relief, it also sparked an

educational discussion on food processing, grain quality, and pricing dynamics in Indian retail.

As the video continues to circulate

widely, it serves as both a lighthearted moment and a reminder of how product pricing can often defy basic logic — or at least appear to.

Zepto Delivery Agent Reveals ₹21,000 Weekly Earnings, Sparks Online Debate

A Zepto delivery agent from Bengaluru has gone viral after sharing his weekly earnings on Reddit, claiming to have earned ₹21,000 in just one week. The post, which included a screenshot of his delivery stats, quickly drew attention and sparked a wave of reactions online.

According to the Reddit post, the agent worked 12-hour shifts from 10 AM to 10 PM between September 29 and October 5, delivering a total of 387 orders. After deducting fuel expenses, he claimed a net earning of approximately ₹18,906.

Captioned "What I earned in a week (working morning 10am to night 10pm) as Zepto delivery," the post featured earnings per day ranging from ₹2,460 to ₹4,020, with higher payouts on days like October 2 and 5 — possibly due to festive or weather-related demand spikes.

While some users praised the delivery partner's dedication, others



questioned the legitimacy of such high figures. In response, the agent clarified that factors such as rain, peak-hour bonuses, and surge pricing play a crucial role in boosting payouts.

"What's better is rain — not full-blown, but gentle rain that lasts long — as we get surge bonuses," he wrote in the comments. He added that during another week, he earned ₹12,000 in just three days, thanks to persistent rain and high demand.

The viral post has reignited conversations about the gig economy in India, with some users impressed by the income potential, while others raised concerns over long working hours and sustainability.

With delivery platforms like Zepto offering incentives during peak periods, earnings can vary dramatically depending on location, weather, and time investment — making each rider's experience unique.

Viral Video of Woman Taking Bicycle on Mumbai Metro Sparks Debate Online

A viral video showing a woman carrying her bicycle inside a Mumbai Metro coach has ignited a spirited debate across social media platforms. The video, shared on X (formerly Twitter), has divided opinions among netizens, with some hailing it as a sign of urban progress, while others questioned its practicality in India.

The clip captures the woman calmly entering a Mumbai Metro train, using a designated bicycle slot where she hangs her bicycle by the front wheel. She later unhooks it with ease and exits the train, demonstrating how the system is designed to work.

Mumbai Metro currently allows bicycles onboard specific lines — namely Line 2A (Yellow Line) and Line 7 (Red Line) — in an effort to promote eco-friendly travel and improve last-mile connectivity for commuters. Importantly, passengers are not charged extra for bringing bicycles aboard, making it an accessible green option.

The video was originally posted by a user named Lord Immy Kant, who praised the facility: "This is a fantastic facility in the Mumbai Metro. I wish to see more and more Mumbai-



kars using it."

However, the post received mixed reactions. While some applauded the initiative, others expressed skepticism about its long-term viability. "No. That feature is not meant for a country like India," one user replied. "What happens when ten cyclists try

to get on during rush hour?"

Another user took a more balanced view: "Integrating metro services with last-mile connectivity is the future. If managed well, this could reduce traffic and pollution."

As Indian cities grow denser and traffic issues worsen, such sustaina-

ble transit initiatives may become increasingly important — provided they can be effectively implemented and managed. Early responses suggest strong interest, especially from developers, tech enthusiasts, and enterprise users exploring immersive computing solutions.

India Beat Malaysia 2-1 to Reach Sultan of Johor Cup Final

India marched into the final of the Sultan of Johor Cup junior men's hockey tournament with a hard-fought 2-1 win over hosts Malaysia in their last group match on Friday.

Despite tricky wet conditions that delayed the start, India showed resilience and tactical discipline to notch their record eighth final appearance in the tournament's 12-year history. They will face Australia in the summit clash on Saturday.

After a cagey first quarter, India broke the deadlock in the 22nd minute when Gurjot Singh converted a rebound from a penalty corner. India dominated the first half, earning nine penalty corners, but failed to convert most, with Malaysian goalkeeper Haziq Hairul making multiple saves.

Malaysia responded strongly after halftime and levelled in the 43rd minute through Naaveenesh Panicker, who tapped in a loose ball as India's defenders struggled to clear their lines. However, India quickly regained control, and five minutes later, Sourabh Anand Kushwaha restored the lead with a clinical finish from a rebound in a one-on-one situation.



India's defence held firm in the final minutes, denying Malaysia from two late penalty corners. The Indian backline, backed by sharp man-to-man marking and calm under pressure, ensured no further slip-ups.

Though wasteful in penalty

corner conversions, India showed tactical maturity and composure to close out the game. Their ability to respond swiftly after conceding, and their control in the dying minutes, highlighted the squad's growing confidence heading into the final.

The victory puts India on course for a potential fourth Sultan of Johor Cup title, with their last win coming in 2014. Saturday's final against Australia promises a high-octane clash between two traditional junior hockey powerhouses.

Travis Head Backs Kohli and Rohit to Play 2027 ODI World Cup



Australian opener Travis Head has expressed confidence that Indian cricket stalwarts Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma will continue playing till the 2027 ODI World Cup, calling them the

"great white ball" duo of modern cricket.

As India gears up to face Australia in a three-match ODI series starting October 19 in Perth, speculation around the future of the two senior

Indian batters has intensified. Both Rohit and Kohli have remained non-committal about their long-term ODI plans following India's heart-breaking loss in the 2023 World Cup final, but their fitness and form have continued to defy age-related concerns.

Speaking ahead of the series, Head praised the Indian veterans for their longevity and consistent performances on the international stage. "They're absolute legends of the game. The way they've performed over the years is unbelievable. I don't see any reason why they wouldn't be part of the next World Cup," Head said.

Rohit, 38, and Kohli, 36, remain two of the most prolific run-scorers in ODI history. Both have maintained top-level performances even as younger talents emerge in Indian cricket. Their presence in the squad for the Australia series has renewed debate on whether they are planning a full four-year cycle or a more gradual exit from the format.

The Indian team management has not issued any official statement about their ODI plans beyond this season, but insiders suggest both players are motivated by unfinished business, especially after the missed opportunity in 2023.

The series in Australia will likely offer more clues, but for now, the endorsement from a respected rival like Head adds weight to the belief that Rohit and Kohli may yet have another World Cup run left in them.

Harry Brook to Lead England in 1st T20I Against New Zealand

The England Men's Cricket Team has announced its playing XI for the first T20I of the three-match series against New Zealand, set to be held at Hagley Oval in Christchurch on Friday. Right-handed batter Harry Brook has been named captain, with former skipper Jos Buttler returning as wicketkeeper.

The match, scheduled to begin at 7:15 am UK and Ireland time, marks the start of an exciting white-ball tour for both sides. England will aim to set the tone early in the series, especially with several fresh faces and a change in leadership.

England Playing XI: Phil Salt, Jos Buttler (wk), Jacob Bethell, Harry Brook (c), Tom Banton, Sam Curran, Jordan Cox, Brydon Carse, Liam Dawson, Adil Rashid, Luke Wood.

England's squad blends experience and emerging talent, with Brook at the helm in the absence of regular white-ball captain Moeen Ali. The inclusion of youngsters like Bethell and Cox suggests a strategic eye toward the future.

Following the T20Is, the tour continues with three One Day Internationals (ODIs) starting October 26 in Mount Maunganui, followed by matches in Hamilton (October 29) and Wellington (November 1), all starting at 1:00 am UK time.

Meanwhile, hosts New Zealand will be without several key players due to injury, including Finn Allen, Adam Milne, Glenn Phillips, Lockie Ferguson, and Will O'Rourke. Mitchell Santner will captain the side.

New Zealand T20I Squad: Mitchell Santner (c), Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Zak Foulkes, Matt Henry, Bevon Jacobs, Kyle Jamieson, Daryl Mitchell, Jimmy Neesham, Rachin Ravindra, Tim Robinson, Tim Seifert (wk).

With both teams fielding experimental line-ups, the series promises competitive action and a glimpse into the next generation of cricketing stars.



FIFA Confirms Over 1 Million Tickets Sold for 2026 World Cup



FIFA has announced that over 1 million tickets have already been sold for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, set to take place across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This marks the first official sales update since ticketing began earlier this month.

Despite only 28 of the 48 participating teams having secured qualification so far, fans from 212 countries and territories have already purchased tickets, reflecting the global excitement surrounding football's biggest tournament.

As expected, the highest demand has come from residents of the host nations — the U.S., Canada, and Mexico — but the international response has been substantial. The expanded format of the 2026 tournament, with 48 teams and matches in 16 cities across North America, has only added to the appeal.

In addition to announcing the sales milestone, FIFA also opened its official ticket resale platform. Notably, tickets for the

highly anticipated World Cup final, set to be held at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey, are now available on the resale site at eye-watering prices ranging from \$9,538 to \$57,500 per seat.

FIFA has emphasized that all resale transactions should go through the official platform to prevent fraud and ensure ticket authenticity. The organization also confirmed that more ticket batches will be released in the coming months as additional teams qualify.

With the tournament now less than a year away, preparations are ramping up across host cities. The 2026 edition is expected to break multiple records, including total attendance and global viewership, cementing its place as one of the most anticipated sporting events in history.

Fans hoping to attend are advised to register with FIFA for upcoming sales phases and monitor official channels for updates.

Liverpool Eye Rebound vs Man United, Postecoglou Seeks First Win at Forest



Liverpool will aim to rediscover their winning form against arch-rivals Manchester United on Sunday, while Nottingham Forest boss Ange Postecoglou continues his search for a first league win of the season.

Just one point behind Premier League leaders Arsenal, Liverpool are looking to shake off a run of three consecutive defeats — including losses to Crystal Palace, Chelsea, and Galatasaray. The Reds will hope to channel the energy of Anfield and take inspiration from their famous 7-0 demolition of United in March 2023, which the club cheekily referenced on social media this week.

Mohamed Salah, who scored twice in that historic win and has netted in 10 of his last 11 games against United, will be key to Liverpool's hopes. However, the Egyptian forward is yet to hit top form this season, while big-money signings Florian Wirtz and Alexander Isak are still settling in.

United haven't won at Anfield

since 2016, but have managed back-to-back draws on their last two visits. While still in mid-table, manager Ruben Amorim will sense an opportunity to expose Liverpool's recent defensive vulnerabilities.

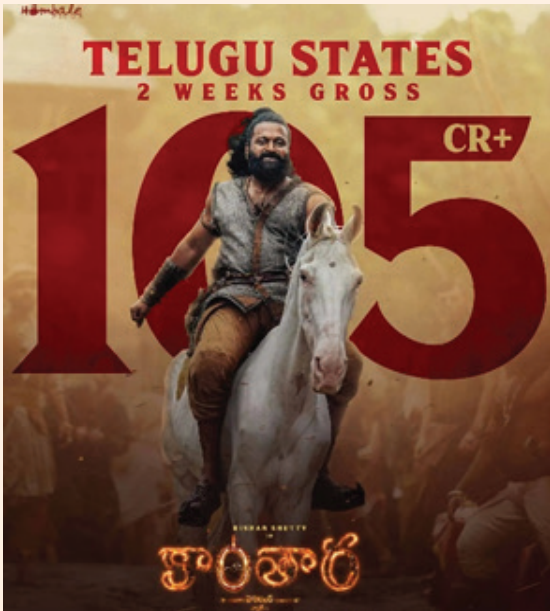
Meanwhile, Ange Postecoglou's position at Nottingham Forest remains under scrutiny. After a winless start to the campaign, Forest sit just one spot above the relegation zone. They host Chelsea in Saturday's early kick-off, hoping to end a dismal run that has seen fans call for the Australian's exit.

Postecoglou, however, remains defiant, saying he "loves the fight," amid reports linking Sean Dyche to his job.

Elsewhere, in-form Antoine Semenyo leads high-flying Bournemouth into a clash with Crystal Palace. The Ghanaian winger has contributed to 82% of his team's goals this season, making him one of the league's standout performers.

Premier League action resumes this weekend with high stakes across the table.

Kantara Chapter 1 Crosses ₹100 Cr Mark in Telugu States



Rishab Shetty's mythological action-drama Kantara Chapter 1 continues its unstoppable box office run, now achieving a significant milestone in the Telugu states. The film has grossed a staggering ₹105 crore in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana alone, just two weeks after its theatrical release. Produced by Hombale Films and directed by Rishab Shetty himself, Kantara Chapter 1 is being praised as one of the most culturally rooted and visually striking Indian films in recent memory. Its powerful storytelling, rich folklore elements, and intense performances have resonated with audiences across regions and languages. The film has now amassed a global gross of ₹717.50 crore, cementing its status as one of the year's biggest cinematic successes. In North America, Kantara Chapter 1 has also performed exceptionally well, earning over \$4.3 million—a rare feat for a film so deeply steeped in regional my-

thology and tradition. The strong performance in Telugu-speaking regions highlights the pan-Indian appeal of the film. It joins the elite club of films that have crossed the ₹100 crore mark in these states, showcasing the growing market for content-driven, culturally rich cinema. This milestone also reinforces Hombale Films' position as one of the leading production houses in Indian cinema, following the success of K.G.F and Salaar. With its theatrical run still going strong, Kantara Chapter 1 is expected to climb higher on the box office charts in the coming weeks. The film's emotional depth, action sequences, and rooted narrative continue to draw audiences in large numbers. Fans now eagerly await updates on Kantara Chapter 2, as the franchise appears poised to become one of Indian cinema's most significant cultural sagas.

Prithviraj Sukumaran Unveils First Look of New Film i, Nobody



Actor-filmmaker Prithviraj Sukumaran has announced his next project, titled i, Nobody, much to the delight of fans. The announcement came via his official Instagram handle, where he also unveiled the film's first look poster. The poster features Prithviraj in a strikingly different avatar — sporting a nerdy look with a checkered shirt and spectacles, hinting at a character far removed from his usual action-hero image. The caption read, "I, NOBODY. Shoot in progress." The minimalist poster has already sparked curiosity among movie buffs across social media platforms. i, Nobody is directed by Nissam Basheer, known for his work in Rorschach, and stars acclaimed actress Parvathy Thiruvothu in a pivotal role. While specific plot details are under wraps, the film is expected to be a character-driven drama, possibly touching on themes of identity and self-

worth, given the intriguing title. The announcement comes on the heels of another big reveal — the first glimpse teaser of Prithviraj's high-octane action drama Khalifa, which he released as a special treat for fans on his birthday. The back-to-back updates have kept fans buzzing with excitement about the actor's dynamic film lineup. Parvathy and Prithviraj have previously collaborated to critical acclaim, and their reunion in i, Nobody is already generating strong anticipation among Malayalam cinema enthusiasts. While the production of i, Nobody is currently underway, a release date has not yet been announced. The unique first look has set the tone for what appears to be a thought-provoking film, signaling yet another bold choice in Prithviraj Sukumaran's versatile career. Stay tuned for more updates on i, Nobody as the shoot progresses.

Pradeep Ranganathan's Dude – A Watchable Entertainer with Some Bumps



Rating: 3/5 After back-to-back blockbusters with Love Today and Dragon, Pradeep Ranganathan returns with Dude, a youth-centric entertainer directed by Keerthiswaran. Starring Mamitha Baiju as the female lead, the film brings a blend of comedy, emotion, and relationship drama. The story revolves around Gagan (Pradeep Ranganathan), a heartbroken youngster who runs an event management company with his cousin

Kundhana (Mamitha Baiju). Things take a turn when Kundhana confesses her feelings for Gagan, leading to a series of impulsive decisions that alter their lives. Pradeep once again proves his strength as a performer with his sharp comic timing and quirky expressions, especially in the laugh-out-loud interval block. Sarathkumar, in a dual-shaded surprise role, delivers a strong performance, adding depth to the story. Mamitha Baiju impresses in a key role

and shares good chemistry with Pradeep. The first half, although slow initially, picks up pace and is packed with fun moments. However, the second half struggles to maintain the same momentum. As the film shifts towards emotional storytelling and a social message, the entertainment quotient drops. While the intent is appreciable, the emotional core doesn't hit as hard, and Pradeep's character arc may leave audiences divided. Technically, Sai Abhyankkar's music

and background score work well, with the "Boom Boom" song standing out. Niketh Bommi's cinematography is vibrant, and production values by Mythri Movie Makers are solid. Debutant director Keerthiswaran shows promise, though he needs to handle pacing and transitions better. Dude is a decent one-time watch, especially for fans of Pradeep Ranganathan's style of humor. It entertains in parts but doesn't quite deliver a fully satisfying emotional payoff.

Telusu Kada – Urban Romance with a Bold Twist



Siddhu Jonnalagadda, Raashii Khanna, and Srinidhi Shetty headline Telusu Kada, a contemporary romantic drama that explores surrogacy and emotional complexities. Directed by debutante Neeraja Kona, the film released on October 17, 2025. The story follows Varun (Siddhu), a chef seeking

stability, who marries Anjali (Raashii Khanna) through a matrimonial site. When Anjali discovers she cannot conceive, she turns to her husband's ex-girlfriend, Raaga (Srinidhi Shetty), now a doctor, to help with surrogacy. The emotional fallout from this decision forms the crux of the film. The first half is engaging, with mature handling of the surrogacy theme. Siddhu Jonnalagadda delivers a solid performance, breaking away from his DJ Tillu image. His character, though ambiguous, is portrayed with depth. Raashii Khanna shines in a well-written role, while Srinidhi Shetty's character is intriguing but slightly underdeveloped. Viva Harsha impresses in a key role, adding humor and reliability. Technically, Telusu Kada excels. Thaman S delivers impressive songs and background score. Cinematographer Gana Shekar VS and editor Navin Nooli contribute to the film's sleek, polished feel. Costumes and production design elevate the film's urban aesthetic. However, the second half falters with confusing character arcs and pacing issues. The film is a modern reimagining of Chori Chori Chupke Chupke, with a few narrative changes, but struggles to maintain clarity in its layered storytelling. Verdict: Telusu Kada is a refreshing take on urban relationships with bold themes, strong performances, and high technical finesse. While the second half lacks clarity, the film will resonate with audiences open to emotionally complex romantic dramas.

Chiranjeevi Felicitates Asia Cup Star Tilak Varma



Megastar Chiranjeevi honoured Indian cricketer Tilak Varma in a special ceremony held on the sets of his upcoming film Mana Shankara Vara Prasad Garu. The young Hyderabad cricketer was the star of India's recent Asia Cup triumph, playing a match-winning knock in the final against Pakistan. Tilak Varma, whose unbeaten 69 led India to a thrilling victory, was felicitated by Chiranjeevi in a traditional and heartfelt manner. The actor draped a shawl over Tilak and gifted him a framed photograph of himself, making it a memorable token of appreciation. The event was held in the presence of the film's team, including actress Nayanthara, director Anil Ravipudi, and the producers. The entire crew joined in to applaud Tilak's stellar performance, which has made him a household name across the country. Speaking on the occasion, Chiranjeevi praised Tilak for his determination, composure, and extraordinary fight-

ing spirit under pressure. He called Tilak's Asia Cup final innings a "masterclass" that exemplified the qualities of a true champion and noted that such grit at a young age is inspirational for the entire nation. The meeting highlighted not just a celebration of sporting excellence, but also the cultural unity between cinema and cricket—two passions that unite millions of Indians. This gesture from Chiranjeevi has further endeared him to fans, while also giving due recognition to a rising sports star whose performance on the cricketing stage brought immense pride to the nation. Tilak Varma, visibly humbled by the honour, thanked Chiranjeevi and the film crew for their warm welcome and encouragement, calling the moment "unforgettable." The brief yet emotional ceremony became a trending moment, reflecting the spirit of mutual admiration between India's entertainment and sports icons.