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Chandrababu Announces 'Field Grievance Day' to Speed Up Public Services

Amaravati, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday announced that every Friday would be observed as "Field Grievance Day" across Andhra Pradesh, directing officials to visit constituencies regularly and resolve public complaints on priority.

Addressing the second day of the seventh District Collectors' Conference at the Secretariat, Mr. Naidu said governance must blend technology with a human touch and warned officials against negligence in addressing public grievances.

The Chief Minister reviewed file clearance systems, Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS), AWARE, WhatsApp Governance and data integration initiatives. Expressing satisfaction over improved administrative efficiency, he said average e-file clearance time had dropped from nearly 10



days to about two days in the last three months. He asked officials to further accelerate file disposal and move towards a near paperless governance system.

Drawing inspiration from Singapore's grievance redressal model, Mr. Naidu announced that a dedicated platform similar to Praja Darbar would soon be introduced to

strengthen public grievance resolution. He stressed that public representatives and officials should jointly work to resolve complaints at the local level, including mandals.

The Chief Minister directed District Collectors to visit every constituency at least four times a month and treat grievance redressal as a "goodwill mission" aimed at building

public confidence in the government.

He also instructed officials to ensure that all government services are integrated with WhatsApp Governance platforms by December. Nearly 90 per cent of services are already available online, he said, adding that digital governance would help reduce corruption, delays and misuse of systems.



Suvendu Adhikari to Take Oath Today as Bengal's First BJP Chief Minister

Kolkata, May 8 | TPN Bureau
West Bengal is set to witness a historic political transition as senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader Suvendu Adhikari prepares to take oath as the State's first BJP Chief Minister, ending decades of political dominance by regional parties in Bengal.
Mr. Adhikari was unanimously elected leader of the

BJP Legislature Party during a meeting held on Friday at the Biswa Bangla Convention Centre in Kolkata. The meeting was attended by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and several senior BJP leaders.

The swearing-in ceremony is scheduled to take place at 11 a.m. today at the historic Brigade Parade Grounds in Kolkata. Prime Minister

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VMC-Kanaka Durga Temple Row Over 24 Lakh Bills Deepens

Vijayawada, May 8 | TPN Bureau

A dispute between the Kanaka Durga Temple administration and the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) over pending bills related to last year's Bhavani Deeksha celebrations has intensified, with both sides reportedly differing over procedural approvals and payment clearance.

The controversy pertains to nearly 24 lakh spent on the dis-



tribution of milk and biscuits to devotees during the Bhavani Deeksha period. According to temple sources,

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Lokesh to Lead Coordination Panel as TDP Forms 19 Committees for Mahanadu

Amaravati, May 8 | TPN Bureau

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has constituted 19 committees for the smooth conduct of its annual conclave "Mahanadu," scheduled to be held from May 27 to 29 at the IFFCO SEZ premises in Nellore district. A high-level Coordination Committee comprising 10 members has been formed under the leadership of TDP National General Secretary and Minister Nara Lokesh, who will serve as Convener. State party president Palla Srinivasa Rao has been appointed Co-convenor.

The party leadership said the committees include a mix of senior and young leaders from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to ensure effective coordination of arrangements. A Mobilisation Committee has



been constituted under Minister Gottipati Ravi Kumar, with Ministers NMD Farooq, Anagani Satya Prasad, B.C. Jannardhan Reddy and Kinjarapu Atchannaidu among the members.

The Resolutions Committee will be headed by Politburo member Yanamala Ramakrishnudu, while MLAs Somireddy Chtandramohan Reddy and Kalava Srinivasulu will serve as Co-conveners. Several senior leaders, including

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Row Erupts in Kerala Congress Over Senior Leader's Conduct Towards Woman MLA

Thiruvananthapuram, May 8 | TPN Bureau

A controversy has erupted in Kerala after a video showing senior Congress leader Cherian Philip allegedly behaving inappropriately with newly elected MLA Bindu Krishna at the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) headquarters went viral on social media.

The incident reportedly took place during a Congress legislative party meeting at the KPCC office. According to party sources, Ms. Krishna, MLA from Kollam constituency, arrived at the venue and greeted party workers and media personnel before being welcomed by Mr. Philip.



Video footage circulating online appears to show the senior leader attempting to hug the MLA while she tried to maintain distance and offer only a handshake. The footage further shows Ms. Krishna stepping aside and greeting him with folded hands before moving away.

The incident triggered sharp reactions online, with several social media users and

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Over 3.55 Lakh Students to Appear for AP EAPCET-2026

Kakinada, May 8 | TPN Bureau

A total of 3,55,008 students will appear for the AP EAPCET-2026 examinations to be conducted across 142 centres, including one in Hyderabad, Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU) Kakinada Vice-Chancellor and AP EAPCET Chairman C.S.R.K. Prasad said on Friday.

Addressing the media along



with Convener N. Mohan Rao, Mr. Prasad said that 2,76,579 students had registered for the Engineering stream, while 79,224 candidates wo

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Vijay Gets Governor's Nod to Form Government in Tamil Nadu

Chennai, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief Vijay on Friday received approval from Governor R. N. Ravi to form the government in Tamil Nadu after successfully demonstrating majority support in the Assembly.

The development came after Vijay met the Governor at Raj Bhavan and formally staked claim to form the government. TVK had emerged as the single-largest party in the recently concluded Assembly elections by winning 108 seats in the 234-member Assembly, falling short of the majority mark of 118 seats required to independently form the government.

Following intense political negotiations over the past few days, TVK secured crucial support from the Indian National Congress, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi. Congress, which won five seats, extended support to TVK after ending its long-standing alliance with the



Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. The CPI, CPI(M), and VCK, which secured two seats each, also backed Vijay's claim, taking the alliance tally to 118 seats.

In official communications submitted to the Governor, CPI(M) conveyed unconditional support to TVK, while CPI

extended what it described as "conditional support" in favour of ensuring stable, secular and democratic governance in Tamil Nadu.

The delay in inviting Vijay to form the government had earlier sparked criticism from TVK leaders and alliance partners, who accused the Gover-

nor of unnecessarily prolonging the constitutional process. Several parties demanded that Vijay be invited immediately and asked to prove his majority through a floor test on the Assembly floor.

Earlier this week, the Governor had reportedly sought clarity regarding the exact number

of legislators supporting TVK's claim before granting approval.

Vijay, who contested from two constituencies and won both seats, is expected to vacate the Trichy Assembly seat and continue as MLA from Chennai Perambur. Once he resigns from one constituency, the effective strength of the Assembly will reduce to 233, bringing down the majority mark to 117.

The Assembly elections, conducted in a single phase on April 23, marked a historic political shift in Tamil Nadu, effectively ending the decades-long dominance of the DMK-AIADMK bipolar political structure. For the first time in the State's electoral history, no single party secured an outright majority on its own.

Political observers described Vijay's electoral debut as one of the most significant developments in recent Tamil Nadu politics, with attention now focused on how his administration may reshape the State's political and governance landscape

Commercial Taxes Staff Intensify Stir Against Chief Commissioner

Amaravati, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Protests by employees of the Commercial Taxes Department intensified across Andhra Pradesh on Friday, with staff members openly staging demonstrations against Chief Commissioner Ahmed Babu over alleged administrative pressure, punitive transfers and disciplinary actions.

Employees alleged that the department was adopting a vindictive approach towards union representatives and dissenting staff members. Protesters claimed that transfers and charge memos were being used as tools to suppress opposition within the department.

Despite efforts by senior officials to contain the agitation, employees said the protests were spreading across the State. Demonstrators raised slogans de-

manding justice, transparency and an end to what they described as arbitrary administrative practices. Association leaders alleged that several departmental orders issued under the present administration had been struck down by courts. APCTSA General Secretary G.M. Ramesh Kumar said employees would continue both legal and democratic forms of protest until their grievances were addressed.

Union leaders also cited a recent High Court order quashing the deputation transfer of a senior assistant to Srikakulam district, describing it as a setback to the department's decisions.

Employees reaffirmed that the agitation would continue until "fair and transparent administration" was ensured in the department.

Naidu Unveils Irrigation Calendar for 25 Major Projects, Pushes Citizen-Centric Governance

Amaravati, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Friday unveiled a comprehensive irrigation calendar with timelines for 25 major irrigation and flood management projects, while calling for stronger law and order, faster infrastructure execution and citizen-centric governance across Andhra Pradesh.

Addressing the concluding session of the two-day Collectors' and SPs' conference in Amaravati, the Chief Minister said governance must move from an individual-centric "I" approach to a collective "we" model. Stressing the importance of coordination among officials, he said teamwork was essential for delivering effective governance and ensuring public confidence in the administration.

The conference, which lasted nearly 22 hours over two days, focused on irrigation, investments, law and order, welfare implementation and infrastructure development. Mr. Naidu described the irrigation



calendar as a reflection of the government's commitment to strengthening water infrastructure and ensuring long-term agricultural sustainability.

According to the calendar, the Polavaram Left Main Canal and Guntur Channel modernisation works are targeted for July 2026, while Veligonda Phase-I is scheduled for completion by August 2026. Foundation works for the Handri Neeva Branch and

Galeru-Nagari projects are also planned during the same period. The government aims to begin work on the Neradi Barrage by November 2026.

Among the major targets set for 2027 are the completion of the Polavaram Project, Nagavali-Champavathi River Link, Budameru Flood Protection Project, Muktyala Lift Irrigation Scheme and Chintalapudi Lift Irrigation Scheme Phase-I by June 2027. Works relating to Vamsadhara Phase-II

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Suvendu Adhikari to Take Oath Today as Bengal's First BJP Chief Minister

Continued

Narendra Modi, top BJP national leaders and Chief Ministers from several NDA-ruled States are expected to attend the event.

The BJP registered a sweeping victory in the recently concluded Assembly elections by winning 207 seats in the 294-member House, comfortably crossing the majority mark. The ruling All India Trinamool Congress was reduced to 80 seats, marking one of the biggest electoral setbacks for the party in recent years.

Mr. Adhikari contested from both Bhabanipur and Nandigram constituencies and emerged victorious in both. His victory over Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in Bhabanipur, by a margin of over 15,000 votes, has drawn nationwide political attention and is being viewed as a symbolic breakthrough for the BJP in Bengal politics.

Party sources indicated that the BJP high command is considering the appointment of

two Deputy Chief Ministers to ensure administrative balance and broader regional representation in the new Cabinet. One of the Deputy Chief Minister posts is likely to be allotted to a woman leader, with reports suggesting the name of BJP leader Agnimitra Paul being under consideration. Representation for North Bengal and tribal regions is also expected to receive priority in the Cabinet formation.

Political observers described the election verdict as a watershed moment in West Bengal politics, as it marks the first time the BJP has come to power in the State. The results are also being interpreted as a major expansion of the BJP's footprint in eastern India.

Security arrangements have been intensified across Kolkata ahead of the swearing-in ceremony, with thousands of BJP workers and supporters expected to attend the event. The new government is expected to formally assume office later in the day following the oath-taking ceremony.

VMC-Kanaka Durga Temple Row Over 24 Lakh Bills Deepens

Continued

the arrangements were made by the VMC following directions aimed at ensuring that devotees did not face inconvenience during the festival season. However, temple authorities alleged that the VMC Commissioner had proceeded with the arrangements without issuing an official note file or submitting formal communication to the temple administration at the time. Officials said the bills were later forwarded directly to the temple for payment clearance. Sources in the temple administration stated that Executive Officer Sreenanayak, who has been facing allegations of delaying payments, does not possess independent powers to clear such bills without following due administrative procedure. They maintained that all expenditure proposals require sup-

porting documents, quotations, and approval from the temple trust board before funds can be released. Temple officials further stated that if proper documentation and official correspondence had been submitted during the Bhavani Deeksha period itself, the bills could have been processed much earlier. The delay, they said, occurred because mandatory procedures were not followed.

Meanwhile, the VMC Commissioner is understood to have written to the temple EO on April 29 seeking release of the pending payments after learning that the bills remained uncleared. Vendors who supplied milk and biscuits are reportedly mounting pressure on civic officials for settlement of dues. Despite the escalating controversy, no breakthrough has yet been reached in resolving the issue.

Row Erupts in Kerala Congress Over Senior Leader's Conduct Towards Woman MLA

Continued

women's groups expressing concern over issues relating to personal boundaries and conduct in public spaces. Critics questioned the behaviour of party leaders and the response of those present at the venue.

The controversy intensified after visuals allegedly showed Mr. Philip making another attempt to approach the MLA

even after she moved away. The incident has sparked debate within political circles regarding the treatment of women in public life and political organisations. Neither Cherian Philip nor Bindu Krishna has issued an official statement on the controversy so far. The Congress leadership has also not publicly responded to the incident at the time of reporting.

Over 3.55 Lakh Students to Appear for AP EAPCET-2026

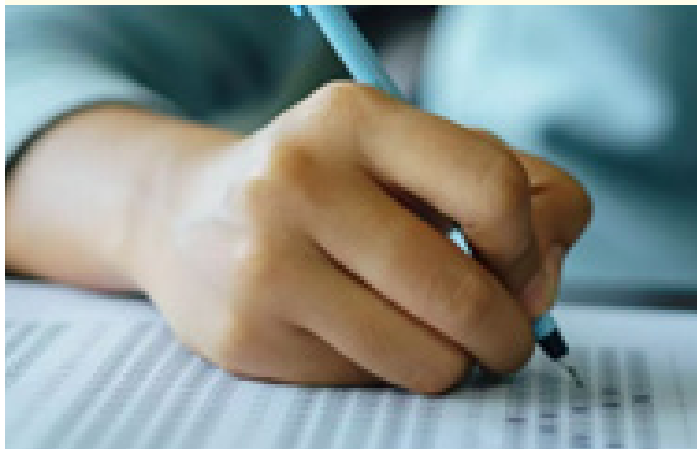
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A special centre has been allotted at Kurnool for Urdu-medium students.

The Engineering examinations will be conducted from May 12 to 15 and again on May 18, while the Agriculture and Pharmacy stream examinations are scheduled for May 19 and 20. The tests will be held in two sessions each day — from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Officials said students would

be informed about their examination centres one day before the test and advised them to reach the centres well in advance, warning that even a one-minute delay would not be permitted. A scribe facility has been arranged for 27 differently-abled candidates. Students have also been instructed to avoid applying mehendi on their hands and to verify the functioning of computers before the commencement of the examination.



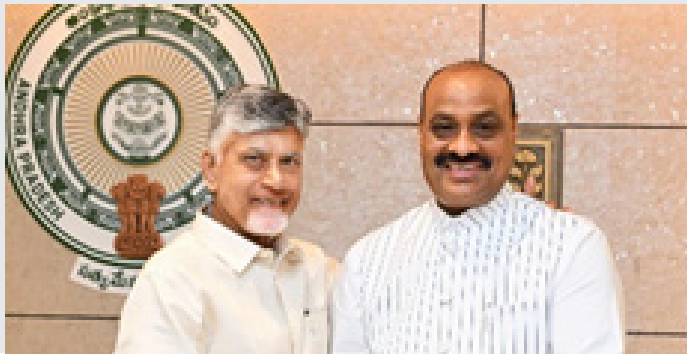
Atchannaidu Sets Record in Speedy E-File Clearance

Amaravati, May 8|TPN Bureau

State Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu has set a new benchmark in administrative efficiency by significantly reducing the time taken for clearance of e-files in the Agriculture Department.

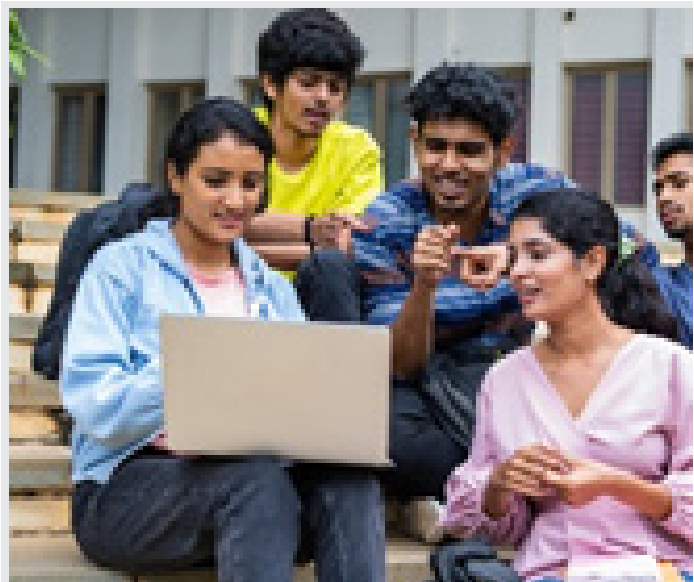
According to officials, the Minister has accelerated the disposal process from an average of nearly five hours earlier to just two hours and 49 minutes, despite handling a large volume of incoming files. The move is aimed at ensuring quicker decision-making and faster delivery of public services.

Officials stated that the Minister's focus on speed, transparency, and accountability has brought renewed momentum to the functioning of the



department and improved coordination within the administrative system.

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu reportedly expressed satisfaction over the rapid pace of e-file clearances, observing that processes which previously took days are now being completed within hours. The Chief Minister also appreciated Atchannaidu's commit-



APECET 2026 Results Announced; Pass Percentage Stands at 91.72

Anantapur, May 8|TPN Bureau

Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University Anantapur (JNTUA), on behalf of the Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE), on Thursday announced the results of APECET-2026, recording an overall pass percentage of 91.72.

The Andhra Pradesh Engineering Common Entrance Test (APECET) was conducted on April 23 for diploma and B.Sc. (Mathematics) students seeking lateral entry into second-year engineering and pharmacy courses. The examination was held in two sessions covering 14 different streams.

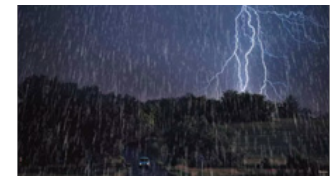
According to officials, 33,751

candidates registered for the examination, of whom 32,434 appeared and 29,750 qualified. The attendance percentage stood at 96.09. Female candidates outperformed male candidates with a pass percentage of 93.34 compared to 90.93 among males. Among districts, Hyderabad recorded the highest overall pass percentage at 97.17, while Krishna district registered 95.43 per cent. NTR district secured a pass percentage of 92.10.

JNTUA authorities stated that preliminary answer keys were released after the examination and objections were invited until April 29. After scrutiny by subject experts, final keys were prepared and results processed accordingly.

Rain, Thunderstorms Likely Across A.P. Till Tuesday

Amaravati, May 8|TPN Bureau The Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) has forecast cloudy weather with scattered rain and thunderstorms across several districts of the State till Tuesday under the influence of a trough extending from the Comorin region to Madhya Pradesh. APSDMA Managing Director Prakhar Jain advised farmers, labourers, and herdsmen to exercise caution during thunderstorms and avoid taking shelter under



trees or remaining in open areas. According to the forecast, light rain accompanied by lightning is likely at isolated places in coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema districts on Saturday and Sunday. The authority also warned of severe heat-wave conditions in Kunavaram

and Vararamachandrapuram mandals of Polavaram district, while heatwave conditions are likely in parts of Aluri Sitharama Raju, Konaseema, East Godavari, Eluru, and Polavaram districts. On Friday, the highest temperature of 40.8 degrees Celsius was recorded in Kadapa, followed by 40.7°C in Panyam of Nandyal district. Rainfall was also reported from several places, including Narsipatnam, Chilikaluripet, and Akividu.

State to Get 12 New Dialysis Centres, Says Minister

Amaravati, May 8|TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Government will establish 12 new dialysis centres across the State under the Prime Minister's National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP), Medical and Health Minister Satyakumar Yadav announced on Thursday.

The Minister said the management of the centres would be entrusted to a private agency selected through a tender process and that the facilities are expected to become operational within three months. With the addition of the new units, the total number of dialysis centres functioning in government secondary-level hospitals in the State will increase from 61 to 73.

Mr. Yadav said the coalition government was allocating nearly 30 crore over a five-year period for the establishment and operation of the centres.



The initiative is aimed at reducing the burden on kidney patients who currently travel long distances for dialysis treatment.

He noted that dialysis in private hospitals costs between 3,000 and 4,000 per session, while many patients require treatment four to five times every month. The new centres would provide services free of cost.

The facilities will be set up in hospitals located in Bhimavaram, Pileru, Jammalamadugu, Venkatagiri, Addanki, Sunnipenta, Railway Kodur, Kondepi, Kovvur, Maidukuru, Nandigama, and Vinukonda. Each centre will be equipped with five dialysis machines and related infrastructure costing about 85 lakh.

The Minister said around 1,500 patients were expected to benefit from the new facilities. He added that the government was already providing free dialysis services through 186

hospitals affiliated with the NTR Vaidya Seva Trust and spending nearly 165 crore annually on dialysis treatment and kidney care across the State.

Marriott Project Will Boost Amaravati's Global Image: Kandula Durgesh

Amaravati, May 8|TPN Bureau

Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh on Friday said the launch of the international standard "Courtyard by Marriott" hotel project in Amaravati would strengthen the capital city's global image and accelerate tourism and business development in the region. Participating in the groundbreaking ceremony of the project at Lingayapalem in Thullur mandal, opposite the APCRDA office, the Minister said the entry of a globally recognised hospitality brand into Amaravati reflects growing investor confidence in the capital city envisioned by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Industries Minister T.G. Bharath also attended the ceremony. Durgesh stated that projects of international standards would play a crucial role in transforming Amaravati into a world-class city and attracting tourists, industrialists, and business professionals from across the globe.

The "Courtyard by Marriott" hotel is being developed by Southern Globe Hotels & Resorts Limited in association with Southern Travels, Globe Civil Projects Limited, and Delta Pure.

The hotel will feature 175 rooms along with modern amenities including a swimming pool, banquet hall, business lounge, and multi-cuisine restaurant. Officials said the project is aimed at providing premium accommodation facilities for international visitors and corporate travellers. The project is scheduled for completion by December 2028.

Naidu Unveils Irrigation Calendar for 25 Major Projects, Pushes Citizen-Centric Governance

Continued

Stage-II, Handri-Neeva Phase-II and Thotapalli distributory systems are scheduled for completion by July 2027. Additional projects, including the Neeva Branch Canal extension, Mulapalli Lift Scheme, Madakasira Branch Canal widening and Janjavathi Reservoir, are targeted for completion by December 2027.

For 2028, the government has fixed June as the deadline for completing the Vedavathi Lift Irrigation Scheme, Bhairavani Thippa and Upper Pennar Project.

The Chief Minister said the government would complete all pending irrigation projects in north Andhra within two years and ensure water reaches tail-end regions in Rayalaseema through the Handri-Neeva system.

Reviewing policing and crime control, Mr. Naidu directed officials to adopt visible and technology-driven policing to instill confidence among citizens and fear among criminals. He instructed police officials to improve investigation standards, use advanced technology for evidence collection and enhance conviction rates. He set a target of increasing the State's conviction rate from the current 49.8 per cent to 70 per cent.

Director General of Police



Harish Gupta informed the meeting that several categories of crime had declined compared to the previous year. Crimes against women reportedly dropped by seven per cent, theft cases by eight per cent, economic offences by 0.3 per cent and crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by nearly 30 per cent.

The DGP said cybercrime victims in the State had lost 652 crore, of which police managed to freeze 116 crore. In response, the Chief Minister directed officials to intensify public awareness campaigns on cyber and financial frauds and announced plans for a dedicated cyber war room with specialised cyber forces.

Expressing concern over road accidents, Mr. Naidu instructed officials to identify accident-prone black spots and coordinate with departments

concerned to reduce fatalities. He also directed police to resolve theft cases within 24 hours wherever possible.

The DGP further informed the conference that police had seized 50,000 kg of red sanders and registered 302 cases, with conviction rates in red sanders smuggling cases tanding at 91 per cent. Highlighting Andhra Pradesh's investment momentum, Mr. Naidu claimed that the State had attracted investments worth 23 lakh crore over the past 23 months, with the potential to generate employment for nearly 24 lakh people. He said strong law and order was crucial for attracting investments and asserted that Andhra Pradesh had built a strong brand image by ensuring "speed of doing business" through faster approvals and improved coordination at the district level.

Lokesh to Lead Coordination Panel as TDP Forms 19 Committees for Mahanadu

MLC Panchumarthi Anuradha, Varla Ramaiah and M.A. Sharif, have been included in the panel. An Invitation Committee has also been formed with Palla Srinivasa Rao, Telangana leader Bakkani Narasimhulu and Andaman & Nicobar unit president Manickyam Yadav as conveners.

Separate committees have been constituted for accommo-

dation, food, media management, finance, cultural programmes, transportation, parking, volunteer coordination, sanitation, medical camps, decorations, photo exhibitions and delegate registration. Senior Ministers have been assigned as conveners for key committees to oversee preparations for the three-day party event.

Police Crack Down on Gambling

Prakasam, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Prakasam district police have intensified their action against illegal gambling activities that threaten public peace and order. In a recent operation, a special team conducted a raid at the SC Colony in Maddipadu mandal. Acting on information, police led by the Maddipadu Sub-Inspector carried out the raid and apprehended three persons involved in gambling. Cash worth 2,500 was seized from their possession. Police officials stated that gambling not only affects

the financial stability of families but also leads to other criminal activities in society. They warned that strict action will continue against such illegal practices. Authorities said that surveillance has been intensified across the district to curb gambling, illegal liquor consumption, and drug-related activities. They also appealed to the public to cooperate with police by reporting any unlawful activities in their surroundings. The identity of informants will be kept strictly confidential, they assured.



Vemireddy Couple Inspects Mahanadu Preparations in Nellore

Nellore, May 08 | TPN Bureau:

Nellore MP Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy and Kovur MLA Vemireddy Prashanthi Reddy visited the IFFCO Kisan SEZ in Kodavaluru mandal on Friday to review arrangements for the upcoming TDP Mahanadu. Describing the event as a matter of prestige for the district, the couple stated they feel "lucky" to host party leaders and activists from across the state. The leaders emphasized that preparations are being made on a historic scale, ensuring top-tier facilities for

the thousands of attendees expected. They are currently coordinating with various party-appointed committees to execute the plan as per the directions of Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu and Minister Nara Lokesh. The inspection was attended by key figures including Zonal Coordinator Mantena Satyanarayana Raju, State Media Coordinator B.V. Venkata Ramudu, and Nellore Deputy Mayor Roop Kumar Yadav. The leaders reiterated their commitment to making this Mahanadu a landmark event in the party's history.



TDP Leader Assures Relief to Fire Victims in Chirala

Chirala, May 8 | TPN Bureau

A major fire accident at Boiavaripalem village in Chirala mandal caused extensive damage, destroying three paddy hay stacks and resulting in an estimated loss of around 5 lakh.Telugu Desam Party youth leader Madduluri Gowri Amarnath visited the incident site on Thursday and expressed shock over the mishap. He interacted with affected farmers and reviewed the extent of the damage. According to locals, nearly 35 acres worth of harvested paddy hay was completely gutted in the fire.

Fire services responded promptly, preventing the blaze from spreading to nearby habitations. Speaking to the victims, Amarnath said it is the responsibility of the government to support farmers affected by such natural or accidental disasters. He assured that he would coordinate with revenue officials to assess the losses and ensure timely compensation from the government. He reiterated that efforts would be made to provide immediate relief to the affected farmers and restore their livelihood support.

Claims Linking Vijay's Victory to Jagan Photo Are Ridiculous: Minister

Tirupati, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Minister Satya Kumar Yadav has dismissed claims circulating on YSRCP social media that actor Vijay's electoral victory was linked to former Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's image, calling it "ridiculous and laughable." Speaking to the media in Tirupati after offering prayers at Sri Tatayyagunta Gangamma Jatara and presenting traditional offerings to the goddess, the minister said such narratives reflect the opposition's misleading propaganda. He also clarified that the

Governor functions strictly within the constitutional framework and criticism against him is unwarranted. Taking a sharp dig at YSRCP, he said the party has been reduced to 11 seats as the people of Andhra Pradesh have clearly rejected it. He further remarked that outside the state border, former Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy lacks recognition.Referring to political developments in Tamil Nadu, he alleged that former minister Roja campaigned for DMK, which still faced defeat. He said the public has consistently rejected YSRCP due to its governance failures.

New Income Tax Act 2025 Comes Into Effect from April 1, 2026

Vijayawada, May 8 | TPN Bureau

The Income Tax Act 2025 has come into force from April 1, 2026, replacing the 1961 Act and aiming to make tax rules simpler and more accessible to common citizens, said Chief Commissioner of Income Tax Sunita Billa.Addressing the media in Vijayawada, she said the new legislation has been designed in a simplified manner so that even ordinary taxpayers can easily understand it. The procedures have been streamlined to reduce litigation and ensure hassle-free

compliance. She stated that one of the key objectives of the new law is to change the negative perception of the Income Tax Department as a source of harassment. Instead, the focus is on taxpayer convenience and transparency.To create awareness and clear misconceptions, nationwide outreach programmes titled 'Prarambh' are being conducted. Help desks have also been set up to resolve taxpayer queries, and officials will remain continuously accessible to assist citizens under the new system.

Rajahmundry Witnessing Rapid Development Under NDA: MLA

Rajahmundry, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Rajahmundry City MLA Adireddy Srinivas on Friday said that Andhra Pradesh is witnessing rapid development under the NDA coalition government, contrasting it with what he termed "destructive governance" of the previous YSRCP regime. Addressing a press conference at YMVHA Hall on the banks of the Godavari, he said the "double-engine government" is attracting large-scale investments and central projects to the state. He claimed major global companies including Google, Carrier Global, ReNew Energy, Royal Enfield, and DRDO-linked projects are set to invest in Andhra Pradesh, creating significant employment opportunities. He also said the long-pending railway zone issue has moved forward with a gazette



notification under the current government. The MLA stated Rajahmundry has emerged among the top five constituencies in the state and outlined plans to develop the city as a sports and tourism hub, including a modern river-

front project and indoor skating complex.He added that 4.88 crore has been disbursed to 561 beneficiaries under CM Relief Fund and assured resolution of pending applications. He also distributed CMRF cheques during the event.

Somireddy: Coalition Government Rectifying YCP's Land Record 'Sins'

Sarvepalli, Nellore District, May 08 | TPN Bureau:

Sarvepalli MLA Somireddy-Chandramohan Reddy lashed out at the previous YCP regime on Friday, accusing them of intentionally sabotaging land records. Speaking at a passbook distribution ceremony in Manubolu, Somi Reddy stated that the YCP's resurvey process was a "heap of mistakes" designed to target specific villages by placing them under the prohibited 22A list, preventing farmers from securing bank loans. The coalition government is meticulously correcting every error to ensure farmers receive accurate land title passbooks," Somi Reddy said, noting successful resolutions in Parlupalli and Marripalli. He distributed passbooks to farmers from Cherukumudi, Gurivindapudi, and Kommalapudi during the event. The MLA further highlighted the revival of agriculture, not-



ing that 81 lakh in subsidies for farm mechanisation has been released for Sarvepalli. Additionally, 3.50 crore is being allocated for canal repairs under irrigation societies. Warning of a severe El Nino impact, Somi Reddy urged farmers to take necessary precautions for the second crop.

He also conducted a PrajaDarbar, instructing revenue officials to resolve public grievances in a timely manner. The event signaled a shift toward restoring micro-irrigation and small-scale water resources, which MLA Somi Reddy claimed were "completely ignored" over the last five years.

YSRCP Accustomed to Stealing Credit, Alleges MP Sribharat

Visakhapatnam, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Visakhapatnam MP Sribharat has accused the YSRCP of being "well accustomed to stealing credit" and obstructing development in the state.Addressing a press conference in Visakhapatnam on Friday, he alleged that the opposition party does not support the state's progress and instead creates hurdles while claiming credit for ongoing development works. He said that YSRCP is staging drama by projecting themselves as contributors to projects initiated by the current government.He stated that Visakhapatnam is witnessing a surge in investments, with several companies showing interest in areas near Google's upcoming facilities. He added that data centres are only the beginning and more investments are expected in the future.The MP also highlighted key infrastruc-



ture developments such as the Bhogapuram airport, which will boost state revenue and improve connectivity. He said proposals are being made for new rail services, including daily trains

from Visakhapatnam to Bengaluru and a Vande Bharat train to Tirupati. He expressed confidence that these developments will transform North Andhra's growth trajectory.

Continuous Monitoring of Court Cases Vital: VMC Commissioner Dhyanaachandra

Vijayawada, May 8|TPN Bureau

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) Commissioner Dhyanaachandra on Friday stressed the need for continuous review and effective monitoring of court cases involving the Corporation, directing officials to ensure timely implementation of court orders without negligence.

Chairing a review meeting with heads of various departments at the Corporation headquarters, the Commissioner examined the status of pending court cases, implementation of judicial directions, and



measures required for speedy resolution of legal matters concerning the civic body.Dhyanaachandra instructed officials to maintain a complete understanding of every case under their respective departments and work in coordination to avoid delays in legal proceedings. He emphasized that all departments must

promptly submit relevant documents, reports, and information to legal counsel for effective representation before courts.The Commissioner also warned officials against any laxity in handling court-related matters and said timely action was essential to safeguard the interests of the Corporation.



Nellore Rural: 17 Crore Development Surge Launched

Nellore Rural, May 08 | TPN Bureau:

Nellore Rural MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy announced a massive development drive on Friday, marking a significant milestone for the constituency. Addressing a press conference at the MLA office, he revealed that 168 development works, valued at 17 crore, will be officially launched on May 15 at 8:00 AM. In a unique display of community involvement, the foundation stones for all 168 projects will be laid simultaneously across various locations by local residents themselves. Leaders from the TDP, Jana Sena, and BJP alliance

will attend as chief guests. Sridhar Reddy committed to completing these works within a strict 60-day timeline. The MLA highlighted that since the NDA alliance took power, the total value of completed, ongoing, and upcoming projects in the constituency has reached 658 crore. He expressed profound gratitude to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy CM PawanKalyan, and Minister Nara Lokesh for their unwavering support despite the state's financial challenges. The event saw participation from former Mayor NandimandalamBhanusri and cluster in-charges JaladankiSudhakar and Sabir Khan.



Chittoor MLA Office Hosts Public Grievance Redressal Program

Chittoor, May 08 | TPN Bureau:

In a concerted effort to address local issues, a public darbar was held at Chittoor MLA GurajalaJagan Mohan's office on Friday.The event was part of the 'PG RS' (Public Grievance Redressal System) platform, aimed at providing a direct link between the government and the community. During the program, a total of 27 petitions were received. MPDO Srinivasulu, Municipal Corporation DE Ramana, former Mayor Amuda, and TDP City President Naresh personally

interacted with the public to understand their grievances. The petitions, covering various civic and administrative concerns, were carefully examined and immediately forwarded to the relevant departments for swift action. Officials and TDP leaders present at the darbar emphasized the importance of timely resolutions to ensure public trust. Key participants included AO Venu, DTs Ibrahim and Vijaya Krishna, along with several local leaders who assisted in streamlining the process.

MLA BojjalaSudheer Reddy vows to rectify 'revenue chaos' in Srikalahasti

Srikalahasti, May 08 | TPN Bureau:

Srikalahasti MLA BojjalaSudheer Reddy on Friday held a 'PrajaDarbar' at the local PR Guest House. On this occasion, he personally examined the problems of the people of his constituency that came to his attention. He said that the largest percentage of the petitions received in this meeting were related to long-pending revenue and land record issues. Speaking on the occasion, Sudheer Reddy severely criticized the previous YSRCP government. He alleged that YSRCP leaders had completely disrupted the revenue system for

personal gain. He expressed dissatisfaction that common citizens were facing various difficulties in accessing their properties due to the tampered land records. Stating that the previous government had destroyed the system, the MLA reiterated that the coalition government was committed to transparent governance. The MLA directed the officials to thoroughly examine each request and ensure that legal solutions are provided expeditiously. The MLA clarified that the government's priority is to eliminate administrative irregularities and restore public confidence in land management.

State Faces 762 MLD Drinking Water Deficit in Urban Areas

Amaravati, May 8|TPN Bureau

Director of Municipal Administration and Urban Development Dr. P. Sampath Kumar on Thursday said Andhra Pradesh's urban areas are currently facing a drinking water deficit of 762 million litres per day (MLD) during the summer season.Reviewing the implementation of the Summer Action Plan-2026, he said the daily drinking water requirement across 123 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) stands at 2,860 MLD, while the available supply is only 2,098 MLD.According to officials, only 19 ULBs are supplying more than 135 litres per capita per day (LPCD), while 33

ULBs are supplying less than 70 LPCD. Water is being supplied twice daily in 27 ULBs, once daily in 51 ULBs, and at intervals of two days or more in several others.To tackle shortages, 37,723 borewells and 416 water tankers are being used to augment supply. Authorities said all 11,097 water samples tested under quality monitoring were found satisfactory. Dr. Sampath Kumar said 919 summer emergency works worth 57.36 crore have been taken up in 104 ULBs, including tanker supply, borewell flushing, pipeline repairs, and creation of temporary water sources.

Purendra warned that strict action would be taken against institutions operating defective or unsafe buses in violation of safety norms.



ASRAM Medical College Pays Tribute to Alluri Sitarama Raju

Eluru, May 8 | TPN Bureau
The 101st death anniversary of freedom fighter Alluri Sitarama Raju was observed with solemn tribute at ASRAM Medical College in Eluru. The event was organised under the leadership of ASRAM Chief Executive Officer Dr. K. Hanumantharao, with participation from Principal Dr. Chebrole Srinivas, CEO Rajarajan, faculty members, staff, and students. All participants gathered to offer floral tributes at the statue of Alluri Sitarama Raju, honouring his legacy of courage and sacrifice. Speaking on

the occasion, Dr. K. Hanumantharao said that the patriotism, fearless leadership, and selfless struggle of Alluri Sitarama Raju continue to inspire today's youth. He urged students to imbibe his ideals and apply them in their daily lives for the betterment of society. The programme concluded with a collective homage ceremony, where faculty and students reaffirmed their respect for the revolutionary leader. The atmosphere remained solemn and patriotic throughout the commemorative event, reflecting deep admiration for the freedom icon.



Red Cross Services Praised as Benchmark in Eluru

Eluru, May 8 | TPN Bureau
Telugu Desam Party district president and Eluru MLA Badeti Chanti lauded the Indian Red Cross Society's district branch for its exemplary humanitarian services, calling them a source of inspiration for the people of Helapuri. He said the organisation has been effectively expanding its services to reach more needy people and urged further outreach across society. On the occasion of World Red Cross Day, celebrations were held at the Red Cross district office in the Eluru Government Hospital premises, also marking the birth anni-

versary of Red Cross founder Jean-Henri Dunant. MLA Chanti paid floral tributes to the founder's statue and participated in blood donation activities, appreciating voluntary donors. He also interacted with thalassemia patients and their families, acknowledging the importance of continued medical support. The MLA flagged off an awareness rally and praised the Red Cross for leading healthcare services in the district. He added that Eluru Red Cross has become a model institution in the state, urging further strengthening of its service network.

Kurnool Commissioner Reviews Double Railway Line Works

Kurnool, May 8 | TPN Bureau
Kurnool Municipal Corporation Commissioner Challa Obulesu directed officials to ensure smooth execution of the double railway line works near Anand Theatre without any disruptions. During an inspection on Friday at the Eidgah area, he reviewed measures required for ongoing track works and instructed officials to complete shifting of pipelines, culverts, and drainage channels in coordination with railway authorities. He stressed that municipal, R&B, irrigation, and electricity departments must

work in close coordination for timely execution. The Commissioner also asked the engineering wing to monitor the development of alternative road arrangements during the construction phase to avoid inconvenience to the public. He further inspected proposals for a new connectivity road from Eidgah via Indiramma bund to Cheennamma Circle, linking it with the national highway. Traffic CI Mansuruddin, SE Ramanamurthy, ME Manohar Reddy, DE Krishnalatha, and officials from railway and R&B departments participated in the inspection.

ECI Publishes Election Data Reports Within 72 Hours

New Delhi, May 8 | TPN Bureau
The Election Commission of India (ECI) has published Index Cards and Statistical Reports relating to the 2026 Assembly elections and bye-elections within a record 72 hours of declaration of results, according to an official release issued on Friday. The reports have been released for all 830 Assembly constituencies that went to polls, while re-polling for the 144-Falta Assembly constituency in West Bengal is scheduled for May 21. The ECI stated that the digital updation system introduced through ECINET enabled fast-

er publication of election data, a process that earlier took weeks or even months due to manual compilation. The Index Cards contain constituency-wise information on candidates, electors, votes polled, vote share, and counting details. The Commission has also released 14 Statistical Reports covering voter turnout, polling stations, gender-wise participation, party-wise vote share, and constituency-level summaries. The ECI said the initiative was aimed at improving transparency and public accessibility of election-related data for researchers, academicians, and citizens.



Ancient Gangamma Jathara Begins in Tirupati with Grand Traditions

Tirupati, May 8 | TPN Bureau

The annual goddess Sri Tatayyagunta Gangamma Jathara, one of Tirupati's oldest and most vibrant cultural festivals, has commenced with traditional fervour, drawing thousands of devotees from across the region. Celebrated for over 900 years, the Jathara reflects the deep-rooted spiritual and folk traditions of the temple town. Held at the historic Tatayyagunta Gangamma Temple, the festival began on May 5 with the ceremonial Chatimpu (proclamation), marking the start of week-long rituals. The Jathara is dedicated to Goddess Gangamma, revered as the village deity of Tirupati and believed by devotees to be the sister of Lord Venkateswara. According to temple authorities and local leaders, the origins of the festival are rooted in folklore. Legend speaks of a tyrannical chieftain (Palegadu) who oppressed the people, particularly women. To end his cruelty, the Goddess incarnated as Gangamma in Avilala village. When the chieftain went into hiding, she assumed different disguises over seven days to lure him out and ultimately destroyed him on the eighth day. The Jathara commemorates this victory of good over evil. A unique highlight of the festival is the seven days of disguises,



where devotees dress in traditional costumes such as Bairagi, Banda, Thoti, Dora, Matangi, and Sunnapu Kundalu. This ritual symbolises the various forms taken by the Goddess and continues to be a major attraction. Many male devotees also don female attire as part of their vows, reflecting devotion and cultural continuity. The main Jathara day, scheduled for May 12, will witness special rituals and massive participation of devotees. The celebrations will conclude on May 13 with the sacred Viswaroopa Darshanam, where devotees collect holy clay from the idol. Another distinctive cus-

tom of the festival is the practice of devotees using harsh language toward the Goddess, believed to appease her fierce form and bring relief from personal hardships. The Kaikala community plays a crucial traditional role by crafting the idol's features each year. Authorities, including Tirupati MLA Arani Srinivasulu, have ensured elaborate arrangements for crowd management, security, and smooth darshan. With devotees expected from multiple states, the Gangamma Jathara continues to stand as a powerful symbol of faith, folklore, and living tradition in Tirupati.

Red Cross Services Praised on World Red Cross Day

Kadapa, May 8 | TPN Bureau

The Indian Red Cross Society is the first to respond during disasters and provides invaluable humanitarian services, said Kadapa District Employment Officer and Red Cross Secretary A. Suresh Kumar. He spoke at the World Red Cross Day celebrations held at the Red Cross District Office in Kadapa on Friday. Suresh Kumar paid floral tributes to founder Jean-Henri Dunant and said the organisation has grown from assisting wounded soldiers to a global humanitarian network. He highlighted services such as blood banks offering affordable sup-



ply, first-aid training for industrial workers, free health camps, blood donation drives, awareness on seasonal diseases, and tree plantation programmes. As part of the event, blood group testing was con-

ducted for children at the Juvenile Home, and identity cards were issued. Medical officers, district coordinators, Red Cross members, and staff participated in the programme.

Kurnool Commissioner Expresses Anger Over Sanitation Negligence

Kurnool, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Municipal Corporation Commissioner Challa Obulesu expressed strong dissatisfaction over the poor implementation of sanitation duties in the city, questioning repeated negligence by sanitation supervisory staff. During an inspection on Friday at the 16th sanitation division in Y Junction, he reviewed the attendance muster and field-level sanitation works. He inspected areas including Ballari Chaurasta, Seetharamanagar, Ashok Nagar, and Roja Street. The Commissioner was unhappy that despite clear instructions to be present by 5:30 AM, several staff members failed to report on time and did not attend the muster. He also objected to the improper execution of cleaning works, noting that waste was not fully cleared even after instructions



were issued. Expressing anger, he asked whether orders need to be repeated every day and urged staff to change their attitude immediately. Public

Health Officer Dr. Naga Prasad, sanitation inspectors Shalibasha and Muniswamy, and others participated in the inspection.



Mock Fire Drill Held at Chittoor Govt Hospital

Chittoor, May 08 | TPN Bureau:

A comprehensive fire awareness program and mock drill were conducted at the Chittoor District Main Government Hospital on Friday as part of "Fire Awareness Week." Organized in collaboration with Apollo, the initiative aimed to equip hospital staff with essential life-saving skills for emergency situations. District Fire Officer C. Peddi Reddy, the chief guest, emphasized that "precaution is life-saving." He stressed the necessity of maintaining functional fire safety equipment in every institution and urged regular training for staff. Reddy noted that a swift, alert response is critical to

minimizing the loss of life and property during a blaze. The live demonstration featured practical training on evacuating patients safely, operating fire extinguishers, and managing emergency alarm systems. Officials highlighted that short circuits, gas leaks, and unattended electronics are leading causes of fires, particularly in high-occupancy areas like hospitals. Key attendees included Medical Superintendent Dr. V. Ushasri and Apollo Unit Head S. Balaraj, alongside medical students and security personnel. The program concluded with a call for strict adherence to safety regulations and coordinated teamwork to ensure patient safety during unforeseen disasters.



TUDA Chairman Urges Central Support for Tirupati's Global Makeover

Tirupati, May 08 | TPN Bureau:

At a high-level meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs held at the Taj Hotel on Friday, TUDA Chairman Dollars Diwakar Reddy made a strong pitch for Tirupati's comprehensive development. Emphasizing the city's unique status as a global spiritual hub, Diwakar Reddy urged the committee to provide special urban development funds to manage the immense daily "floating population" of pilgrims. During his keynote address, the Tuda Chairman detailed the city's progress under the Amrut 2.0 scheme, particularly in enhancing drinking water and drainage infrastructure. He also presented reports on waste management initiatives under the Swachh Bharat Mis-

sion, including the deployment of advanced sanitation machinery and garbage treatment plants. Diwakar Reddy outlined a vision for a "Pollution-Free Tirupati," calling for an increased fleet of electric buses and the construction of multi-level parking centres to tackle growing traffic congestion. Other key proposals included the development of affordable housing for service workers and the establishment of organized vending zones for street vendors. The meeting was attended by MLA AraniSrinivasulu, Municipal In-charge Commissioner Sharada Devi, and senior central officials. Diwakar Reddy reaffirmed TUDA's commitment to sustainable growth that balances modern infrastructure with Tirupati's rich heritage.

School Buses Must Have Fitness Clearance: DTO Parandhama Reddy

Bapatla, May 8 | TPN Bureau

District Transport Officer T.K. Parandhama Reddy has warned that all school buses must strictly comply with safety and fitness standards, failing which strict action will be taken. He stressed that student safety remains the top priority. Speaking on Friday, he said that following Transport Commissioner's orders, special inspections of school buses began across the district from May 1. The exercise is being carried out by dividing Motor Vehicle Inspectors into three teams, with checks being conducted at school premises during the summer holidays. Out of 703 school buses in the district, 120 have been inspected so far. While 655 buses were found fit, fitness certificates of 48 buses had expired, he said. He added that 100 percent inspections will be completed by



May 20. He directed school managements to strictly follow AP Motor Vehicle Rules and AIS 63 norms, including functional emergency exits, fire safety equipment, and GPS tracking systems. He warned that violations would lead to seizure of vehicles and strict legal action.



Joyalukkas Grand Reopening with Diamond Jewellery Show

Rajamahendravaram, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Leading jewellery brand Joyalukkas has reopened its showroom in Rajamahendravaram with a grand ceremony, introducing the exclusive “Brilliance Diamond Jewellery Show” for jewellery lovers.

The showroom was inaugurated by Joyalukkas Group Chairman and Managing Director Dr. Joy Alukkas along with Rajamahendravaram City MLA Adireddy Vasu. Speaking on the occasion, they said the revamped showroom is designed to offer a premium shopping experience with modern interiors and world-class collections.

The exhibition features cut and uncut diamond jewellery,

precious gemstone designs, bridal collections, and contemporary ornaments crafted to match evolving customer preferences. Special focus has been given to wedding jewellery collections.

As part of the reopening offers, the company announced up to 40% discount on gold, silver, and gemstone jewellery. Customers purchasing diamond jewellery worth 1 lakh or more will receive a free gold coin. These offers are valid till May 24.

The three-storey showroom has been redesigned with spacious interiors, premium facilities, and parking convenience, making it a major attraction for jewellery shoppers in the city.



Intermediate Supplementary Exams to Be Conducted in Strict Vigilance: JC Vidadhari

Visakhapatnam, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Joint Collector Gobbilla Vidadhari has directed officials to ensure the smooth and error-free conduct of the Intermediate Advanced Supplementary Examinations scheduled from May 21 to June 2 in the district. During a coordination review meeting held on Friday, she said that a total of 60 examination centres have been set up for first and second-year Intermediate public theory and practical examinations. First-year exams will be conducted from 9 AM to 12 noon, while second-year exams will be held from 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM. She in-

structed officials to ensure all basic facilities such as drinking water, electricity, lighting, furniture, and sanitation are available at every centre. She stressed that students should not face any inconvenience during examinations. The JC made it clear that mobile phones, smartwatches, and other electronic gadgets will not be allowed inside exam centres. She also ordered strict police bandobust, implementation of Section 144, and closure of Xerox centres within 200 meters. Medical and RTC officials were instructed to provide emergency services and transport facilities for students.

BJP Expanding Rapidly Across South India, Says AP Chief Madhav

Vijayawada, May 8|TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh BJP president P.V.N. Madhav on Friday said the BJP is rapidly expanding its footprint across southern states and expressed confidence that the party would soon emerge as a major political force in Kerala as well. Addressing a meeting of BJP state office-bearers at the party's state headquarters in Vijayawada, Madhav said the BJP's victory in West Bengal marked a “historic political milestone” and reflected growing public trust in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Union minister Bhupathiraju Srinivasa Varma, MP Daggubati Purandeswari, Rajya Sabha member Paka Satyanarayana, MLAs and senior party leaders attended the meeting. Madhav alleged that West Bengal had witnessed political vio-

lence and instability under Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, but asserted that people had now voted for development. He said the BJP had also strengthened its position in Puducherry, Assam and Tamil Nadu, while making significant gains in Kerala. The BJP leader said Prime Minister Modi would soon address a major public meeting in Telangana and discuss several key national issues. Highlighting Andhra Pradesh-related developments, Madhav credited the BJP-led Centre for granting permanent status to Amaravati and establishing the Visakhapatnam Railway Zone, which he said would become fully operational from June 1. The party also resolved to hold monthly meetings for Shakti Kendras, mandal and district committees to strengthen grassroots coordination.

Mega Blood Donation Camp Marked World Red Cross Day

Visakhapatnam, May 8 | TPN Bureau

On the occasion of World Red Cross Day and World Thalassemia Day, the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), Visakhapatnam District Branch, organized a mega blood donation camp at the Red Cross Bhavan. Joint Collector Smt. G. Vidadhari attended as the chief guest and paid floral tributes to Red Cross founder Sir Jean Henry Dunant. Along with District Revenue Officer

M. Vishweshwara Naidu, she hoisted the Red Cross flag and highlighted the organisation's humanitarian legacy.

The Joint Collector also visited the newly launched IRCS diagnostic laboratory, which aims to provide affordable “Janata rate” medical testing services for the public, and interacted with children undergoing treatment in the thalassemia wing.

Addressing the gathering, she praised IRCS for its self-

less service in healthcare, blood donation, and disaster response. She urged youth and citizens to actively participate in voluntary blood donation to support thalassemia patients.

IRCS Chairman C. Balasatish said the new lab aims to provide quality diagnostics to BPL families. The event also honoured 25 platinum donors who had donated blood more than 50 times.

Bapatla Police Secures 2nd Rank in State Smart Policing Performance

Bapatla, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Bapatla district police have achieved significant success in crime control and smart policing, securing the 2nd rank statewide in the AP Smart Policing Unit Performance Dashboard. According to official data for 2025-26, the district recorded notable improvements in law and order. Overall crime

has reduced by 11.6%, bodily offences by 20.4%, and riots by 69.2%. Women's safety indicators improved by 12.1%, while investigation of sexual offences reached 95% progress. The police also achieved strong results in road accident prevention by rectifying identified black spots. The district's performance was presented at the state-level Collectors and SPs conference chaired by the

Chief Minister. It highlighted Bapatla's strong implementation of technology-driven policing systems. Out of 19 technical parameters, the district showed excellence in CCTNS, e-Sakshya, drone surveillance, and Dial 112 services, placing it among the top five districts in the state. SP stated that public safety remains the top priority and assured that crime has no place in Bapatla district.

State Fully Prepared for Kharif Season, Says Atchannaidu

Amaravati, May 8|TPN Bureau

State Agriculture Minister Kinjarapu Atchannaidu on Thursday said the Andhra Pradesh government has made comprehensive arrangements to ensure a smooth and productive Kharif-2026 season by guaranteeing adequate supply of seeds, fertilizers, and irrigation water to farmers across the State.

The Minister stated that the Agriculture Department has prepared an extensive action plan to support farmers and prevent shortages during the cropping season. He announced that 7.46 lakh quintals of quality seeds would be supplied on subsidy through the State Seed Development Corporation with an allocation of 294 crore. In addition, 93,000 quintals of green manure seeds would be distributed with a 50 per cent subsidy, while 2.20 lakh quintals of groundnut seeds would be supplied at a 40 per cent subsidy.

Atchannaidu said paddy seed distribution would begin from May 15 through Rythu Seva Kendras, while seeds for pulses, millets, and other crops



would be distributed from June 15. He emphasized that all seeds undergo strict quality testing before distribution.

Assuring farmers that there would be no fertilizer shortage, the Minister said the State currently has 7.77 lakh metric tonnes of fertilizer stocks, including urea, DAP, potash, and complex fertilizers. He warned that strict action would be taken against anyone attempting to create artificial shortages or sell fertilizers at inflated prices.

The Minister also said irri-

gation water release would commence in phases from May 15 after reviewing reservoir storage levels and canal preparedness. Canal repair, desilting, and maintenance works are progressing rapidly in major irrigation systems, including the Godavari and Krishna deltas.

Atchannaidu said the coalition government was committed to providing complete support to farmers through coordinated efforts by the Agriculture and Irrigation Departments.

Land Pooling Offers Better Benefits to Farmers: APCRDA Chief

Amaravati, May 8|TPN Bureau

APCRDA Commissioner V. Vijayarama Raju on Friday called upon farmers in the capital region to actively participate in the development of Amaravati by opting for the Land Pooling Scheme (LPS), stating that it offers better benefits than direct land acquisition.

Addressing Gram Sabhas organised by the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) at Lingayapalem and Uddandarayunipalem villages in Thullur mandal, the Commissioner

held discussions with farmers on issues relating to land pooling and Gramakantham lands.

Mr. Vijayarama Raju clarified that although land acquisition notifications had been issued for road construction and development works in LPS zones, farmers still had the opportunity to voluntarily join the Land Pooling Scheme. He urged them to make use of the scheme to secure long-term benefits.

Responding to concerns raised by villagers regarding Gramakantham lands, the Commissioner assured that the APCRDA was preparing a

comprehensive action plan to resolve pending issues and provide permanent solutions at the earliest.

He also informed farmers that the process of releasing annual lease payments for the 12th year was under way and advised beneficiaries to complete Aadhaar seeding and registration formalities for returnable plots without delay.

APCRDA Additional Commissioner A. Bhargava Teja, Guntur Joint Collector Ashutosh Srivastava, and other officials participated in the meetings.



SBI Employees Protest in Tirupati; Nationwide Strike Set for May 26-27

Tirupati, May 08 | TPN Bureau:

Employees of the State Bank of India (SBI) staged a placard protest in Tirupati on Friday, demanding the immediate filling of long-vacant positions for messengers, armed guards, and clerical staff. Led by VV Prasad, Deputy General Secretary of the SBI Staff Union Amaravati Circle, the protesters announced a nationwide strike on May 26 and 27 to address unresolved grievances. Union leaders highlighted that acute staff shortages and the outsourcing of core banking

functions are compromising security and service standards. Key demands include NPS reforms, pension updates, inter-circle transfers for employees appointed since 2019, and an end to the forced sale of third-party products. Vice President Giridhar further called for the revival of career progression schemes and the appointment of a workmen director to the bank board. Warning that the deterioration of the public sector banking system is imminent, the federation urged management to act swiftly to prevent nationwide service disruptions.

Chirala Rural Police Conduct Awareness Meet on Women Safety

Chirala Rural, May 8 | TPN Bureau

Police conducted an awareness programme at a belt factory in Totavaripalem under Chirala Rural Police Station limits, focusing on women's safety and cyber security. The session was organised as per the directions of Bapatla District SP B. Uma Maheswar and under the guidance of Chirala DSP M.D. Moin. Rural CI led the programme, where members of the Shakti Team educated women workers on safety measures and social awareness. Officials explained the importance of the government's ‘Shakti App’, stating

that it acts as an instant safety tool during emergencies. Women were encouraged to install the app on their mobile phones and approach police without hesitation in case of any threat or harassment. Police also educated participants on cybercrime prevention, POCSO Act provisions, and the ill effects of child marriages. They urged workers to remain vigilant in daily life and follow traffic rules under the “Helmet for Protection” campaign to ensure road safety. Officials reiterated that women and child safety remains the top priority of the police department

AP Waqf Board's ‘Taleem-e-Hunar’ Programme Gets Huge Response

Vijayawada, May 8|TPN Bureau

Andhra Pradesh Waqf Board Chairman Abdul Aziz on Thursday said the “Taleem-e-Hunar” programme, launched to provide free residential corporate education and competitive exam coaching to underprivileged Muslim students, has received an overwhelming response across the State.

Addressing the media, Mr. Aziz said more than 3,000 applications had been received within just three days of the programme's launch. He described the initiative as the first of its kind in the country to be implemented under the aegis of a State Waqf Board.

The programme aims to pro-

vide free Intermediate education along with coaching for IIT-JEE, NEET, and EAMCET examinations to talented Muslim students from economically weaker sections. Mr. Aziz said 250 students would be selected purely on merit through a statewide talent test for the 2026-27 academic year. He added that 33 per cent reservation had been earmarked for girl students. The programme is being implemented in line with Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's vision that poverty should not become a barrier to education, he said.

He urged eligible students to apply online before May 12, the last date for submission of applications.



Three New BC Hostels Sanctioned for Penukonda Constituency

Penukonda, May 8|TPN Bureau

The Andhra Pradesh Government has sanctioned three new Backward Classes (BC) hostels in the Penukonda constituency of Sri Sathya Sai district to improve access to higher education for students from economically weaker sections.

State BC Welfare Minister S. Savitha said the hostels would begin functioning from the upcoming academic year in Parigi, Roddam, and Somandepalli

mandals. Two girls' hostels will be established in Parigi and Roddam, while a boys' hostel will be set up in Somandepalli.

The Minister said the initiative was aimed at reducing dropout rates among BC students, particularly children of poor and migrant labourer families, by providing residential educational facilities along with food and health security.

Officials of the BC Welfare Department have initiated



measures for student admissions and the appointment of

Hostel Welfare Officers (HWOs). District authorities

are also coordinating with Mandal Education Officers and school headmasters to identify eligible students for admission.

Ms. Savitha said the coalition government led by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu was giving priority to BC education by strengthening hostels and residential schools with better infrastructure, nutritious food, purified drinking water, sanitation facilities, and academic support.

New Dawn in Bengal

Andhra Pradesh Sees Sharp Rise in Human Trafficking Cases

"Hey nuton, dekha dik aar-baar, jonmero prothomo shub-hokshon" — O new one, reveal yourself once more in the auspicious first moment of birth.

Rabindranath Tagore wrote these words as an invocation — a prayer to Bengal's ever-renewing spirit. Sung on his birth anniversary, they celebrate renewal and awakening. Gurudev understood that Bengal does not merely change; it is continually reborn.

It is a happy coincidence that just days before his 165th birth anniversary, West Bengal has witnessed a historic political shift. On May 4, the Bharatiya Janata Party secured a landmark victory in the Assembly elections. For the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this was not merely an electoral contest, but an opportunity to restore the lost glory of a great civilisation.

This moment calls for reflection beyond political debate. What is Bengal, and what does it mean to restore her? To understand her present, one must turn to her deeper past, a history shaped by spirituality, reform, and intellectual awakening.

In the 15th century, on the banks of the Ganga in Nabadwip, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu led a devotional movement that transcended caste and social divisions. His kirtans became a form of social reform, embracing all sections of society. The Vaishnavism he inspired shaped Bengal's spiritual character — inclusive, joyful, and humane.

This spirit later found expression in the Baul tradition, embodied by Lalan Fakir, whose songs transcended religious boundaries and celebrated the "man of the heart." This syncretic identity remains central to Bengal's cultural ethos.

In the modern era, Bengal anchored India's intellectual and social awakening. Raja Ram Mohan Roy fought against regressive practices like sati, while Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar championed education and women's empowerment. Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay gave the nation Vande Mataram, a song that inspired generations of freedom fighters. Trailblazers like Kadambini Ganguly paved the way



for women's progress, while Syama Prasad Mukherjee dedicated his life to national unity.

Among these towering figures, Swami Vivekananda stands as one of the most influential voices. His 1893 address at the World's Parliament of Religions introduced India's spiritual heritage to the world and called for harmony among faiths. At home, he urged strength, service, and compassion — reminding society that true spirituality lies in uplifting the poor and empowering the nation.

This is Bengal's legacy, a land of spirituality, reform, and intellectual brilliance. Prime Minister Narendra Modi envisions a Bengal that reawakens this civilisational strength, not by looking backwards alone, but by realising its full potential in the present.

For decades, sections of Bengal's intellectual and political discourse distanced themselves from this rich heritage. The result, it is argued, was a phase of stagnation, institutional decline, and the weakening of cultural confidence. The recent electoral verdict, therefore, represents more than a political outcome; it reflects a renewed aspiration to reconnect with Bengal's roots.

For Prime Minister Modi, this is not a pursuit of power but a larger mission of service, a 'yajna' to restore Bengal's dignity and dynamism. His association with Belur Math and reverence for Swami Vive-

kananda reflect a philosophy where governance is seen as 'seva', service to the people.

Restoring Bengal means building modern infrastructure while preserving its spiritual heritage. It means strengthening education in the land that once led India intellectually. It means empowering tribal communities and addressing the aspirations of people in hilly regions who have long sought equitable development. "Hey nuton" — O new one — this is the call for renewal. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and with the blessings of the people, this moment represents an opportunity for Bengal to move forward with confidence. For a time, it seemed that Bengal's finest days lay in the past. Today, there is renewed hope that the state stands at the threshold of a vibrant future — one defined by prosperity, peace, and a rediscovery of its enduring civilisational spirit.



Rajnath Singh

Union Minister of Defence

NCRB - 2024 Data Reveals Growing Challenge

Human trafficking continues to be one of the gravest human rights challenges confronting India, with vulnerable women, children, and economically marginalised communities increasingly targeted by exploitation networks operating across states. The latest NCRB Crime in India 2024 data presents a disturbing picture for Andhra Pradesh, which has emerged as one of the country's major trafficking-affected states.

According to the NCRB Human Trafficking chapter for 2024, Andhra Pradesh recorded 159 trafficking cases, placing it third after Telangana and Maharashtra. The state accounted for about 7.45 per cent of all cases nationwide. With a trafficking crime rate of 0.3 per lakh population against the national average of 0.2, the data signals a serious and expanding law-and-order concern.

A comparison between 2023 and 2024 shows a sharp rise in trafficking-related crimes. Cases increased from 120 in 2023 to 159 in 2024, marking a 32.5 per cent rise. Experts attribute this to both the expansion of trafficking networks and improved detection and reporting by law enforcement. Increased awareness, stronger intervention by Anti Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs), and intensified policing may also have contributed to higher case registration.

The number of victims identified rose significantly from 209 in 2023 to 313 in 2024. Adult victims formed the largest share, with women emerging as the most vulnerable group. At the same time, the rise in minor victims highlights that children remain at serious risk despite ongoing awareness efforts. The data suggests that organised trafficking networks are increasingly targeting women and girls for commercial sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse.

Commercial sexual exploitation continues to dominate as the primary purpose of trafficking in the state. Cases linked to sexual exploitation rose from 149 in 2023 to 279 in 2024, reflecting the growing influence of organised rackets. Forced labour, which had no



recorded cases in 2023, emerged as a concern in 2024 with 22 victims. Meanwhile, cases related to forced marriages and begging declined. These shifts indicate that trafficking networks are adapting to economic and social vulnerabilities.

Rescue operations by police and AHTUs improved during 2024. The number of rescued victims increased from 201 in 2023 to 314 in 2024, nearly matching the total number of identified victims. Officials view this as evidence of stronger rescue and recovery efforts. However, activists caution that rising rescues also point to larger trafficking operations functioning within and across state borders.

Cases under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA) also rose sharply. Andhra Pradesh recorded 119 ITPA cases in 2024 compared to 68 in 2023, while rescued victims under the Act nearly doubled from 84 to 165. This reflects stronger enforcement against prostitution-linked trafficking networks and increased activity by specialised anti-trafficking units.

Despite improved enforcement, judicial outcomes reveal serious systemic weaknesses. Arrests remained largely unchanged, with 623 persons arrested in 2023 and 624 in 2024. Convictions rose only marginally from eight to twelve, while acquittals and discharges re-

mained high, pointing to gaps in investigation quality, evidence collection, prosecution support, and witness protection.

The most concerning trend is the sharp fall in conviction rates. Although police achieved a 100 per cent charge-sheeting rate in 2024, the conviction rate dropped drastically from 20.3 per cent in 2023 to just 2.4 per cent in 2024. Experts attribute this to delays in trials, hostile witnesses, weak inter-agency coordination, and inadequate survivor protection, all of which undermine successful prosecution.

At the national level, the Ministry of Home Affairs has emphasised strengthening AHTUs, improving inter-state coordination, and enhancing technology-driven policing. Across India, 819 Anti Human Trafficking Units are operational, supported by funding mechanisms such as the Nirbhaya Fund to improve infrastructure and response systems.

However, civil society organisations stress that institutional mechanisms alone are insufficient without effective implementation. Trafficking cases often span multiple districts and states, requiring coordination among police, welfare departments, legal services authorities, and rehabilitation agencies. Persistent challenges in survivor commu-

nication, documentation, and long-term rehabilitation continue to weaken justice outcomes.

The Andhra Pradesh data thus presents a mixed picture. While improved detection, rescue efforts, and enforcement indicate growing institutional attention, rising victim numbers, expanding exploitation networks, and falling conviction rates show that trafficking remains deeply entrenched.

The data underscores the urgent need for stronger investigations, survivor-centred protection systems, faster judicial processes, better institutional coordination, and sustained community-level prevention. Without addressing these systemic gaps, anti-trafficking efforts risk remaining focused on rescue operations while falling short of ensuring long-term justice and accountability for survivors.



Ram mohan Nimmaraju

Secretary - HELP organisation

Balancing Crisis and Calm in Uncertain Times

India Manages Turbulent West Asia Tensions

Amid the evolving geopolitical situation in West Asia, India has moved swiftly to reassure citizens, stabilize essential supplies, and safeguard its strategic interests. A high-level media briefing at the National Media Centre brought together key ministries to present a coordinated response spanning energy security, maritime safety, and the welfare of Indian nationals abroad. The message is clear: preparedness, coordination, and public cooperation are critical in navigating uncertainty.

At the forefront of concern is energy security. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has emphasised that there is no immediate shortage of petrol, diesel, or LPG. Citizens have been urged to avoid panic buying and rely on official communication. This advisory is significant, as artificial demand spikes can strain even well-managed supply systems. Encouraging the use of digital LPG booking, alternate fuels such as PNG and electric cooktops, and general energy conservation reflects a proactive demand-side strategy.

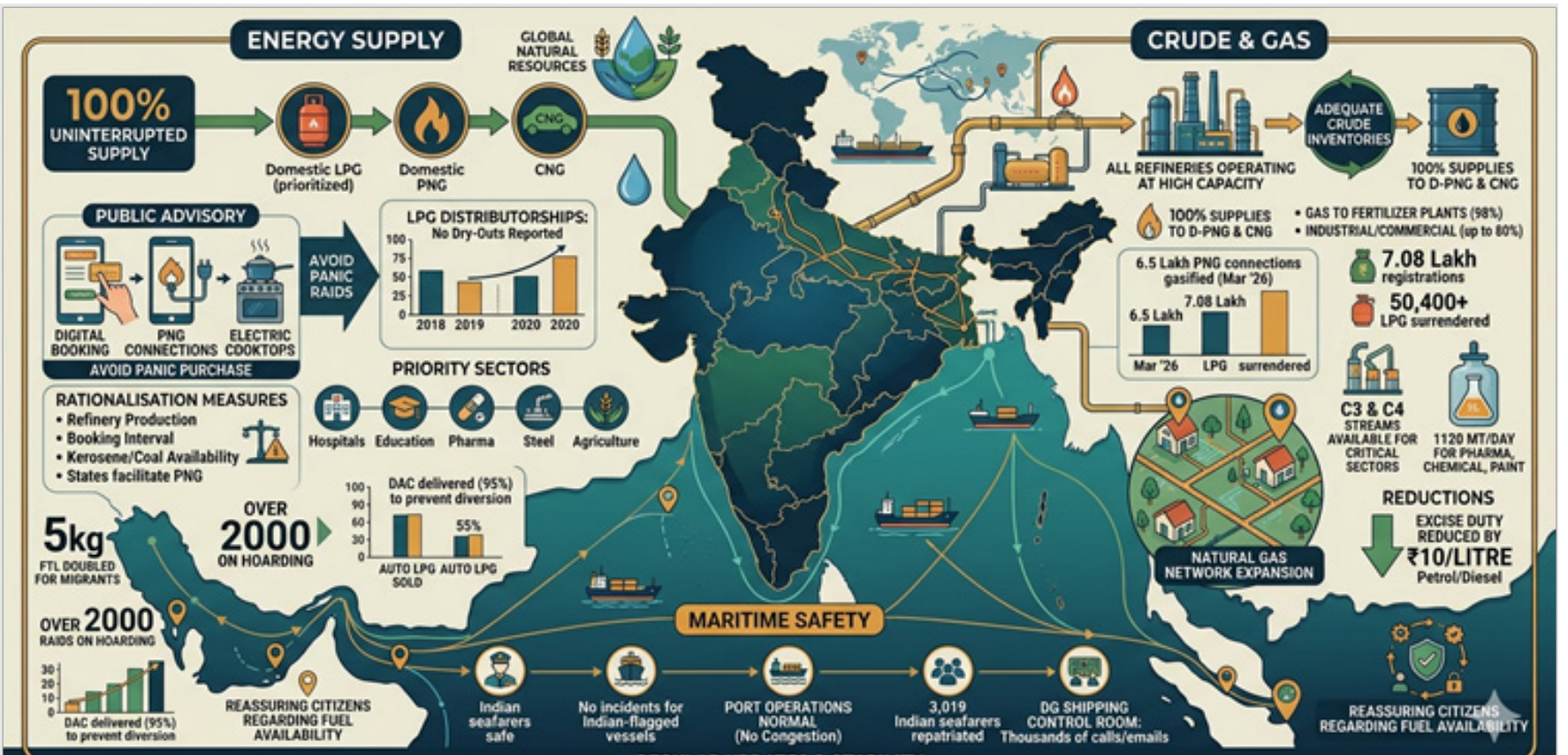
On the supply front, the government has ensured the uninterrupted delivery of domestic LPG, PNG, and CNG. Commercial LPG distribution has been rationalised, prioritising hospitals, educational institutions, and key industrial sectors such as pharma and agriculture. Notably, the supply of 5 kg free trade LPG cylinders to migrant labourers has been doubled, reflecting sensitivity to vulnerable sections. Additional measures, in-

cluding increased refinery output, extended booking intervals, and availability of kerosene and coal, underscore the government's multi-pronged approach to managing fuel demand.

Equally important is the role of states. Empowered under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and LPG Control Order, state governments are responsible for monitoring supply and curbing hoarding and black marketing. The Centre has reinforced this through regular reviews, urging states to maintain daily briefings, intensify enforcement drives, and counter misinformation. The scale of action is evident—over 2,000 raids conducted nationwide in a single day and penalties imposed on hundreds of LPG distributorships highlight a robust enforcement mechanism.

The LPG supply chain, though impacted by global conditions, remains stable. Domestic supply has been prioritized, with no reported dry-outs and a near-total shift to digital bookings. Delivery authentication systems have been strengthened to prevent diversion. Commercial LPG availability has been restored to about 70 per cent of pre-crisis levels, supported by targeted allocation and awareness campaigns. These measures indicate that while constraints exist, the system is adapting effectively.

In parallel, the government is accelerating the transition to natural gas. City Gas Distribution networks are being expanded, with companies offering incentives for PNG connections. Policy interven-



tions, including streamlined approvals and infrastructure expansion under new regulatory frameworks, aim to reduce dependence on LPG in the long term. The push for a gas-based economy is not merely a crisis response but a strategic shift toward cleaner and more resilient energy systems.

Beyond domestic concerns, maritime safety remains a critical priority. The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has confirmed that Indian vessels and seafarers in the Persian Gulf remain safe, with no incidents reported in recent

days. Continuous coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs and global stakeholders has ensured operational continuity. The repatriation of over 3,000 Indian seafarers reflects both preparedness and responsiveness.

The welfare of Indian nationals in the region is another key pillar of the government's response. Diplomatic outreach has been extensive, with high-level visits and continuous engagement with countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Special control rooms, 24/7 hel-

plines, and active embassy coordination have ensured that citizens receive timely assistance. The facilitation of over 2,500 Indians exiting Iran amid partial airspace closures demonstrates the government's commitment to citizen safety.

Air connectivity, a vital link in crisis management, is gradually stabilising. While some airspaces remain partially operational, flights continue from major Gulf hubs, ensuring mobility for Indian nationals. Regular advisories and coordination with airlines have helped maintain clarity and

prevent confusion among travellers.

Taken together, these developments reveal a comprehensive and calibrated response. The government's strategy balances immediate crisis management with long-term structural adjustments, particularly in energy and infrastructure. However, the success of these efforts depends equally on public cooperation and institutional efficiency at the state level.

This moment serves as a reminder that global crises demand domestic resilience. India's ability to maintain supply

chains, protect its citizens, and adapt its policies in real time reflects growing administrative maturity. Yet, vigilance remains essential. Sustained coordination, transparent communication, and continued reforms will determine how effectively the country navigates the uncertainties ahead.

In times of global instability, calm governance backed by decisive action becomes the strongest assurance a nation can offer its people.

WHO Warns of More Hantavirus Cases Amid Cruise Outbreak

The World Health Organization has warned that more cases of hantavirus could emerge following a deadly outbreak linked to a cruise ship, even as it stressed that the spread is likely to remain limited with proper precautions.

The alert comes after three passengers aboard the vessel MV Hondius died due to the rare virus. Another infected passenger was flown to Europe on Thursday as the ship continued its journey towards the Canary Islands, prompting health authorities across multiple countries to intensify monitoring efforts.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that five confirmed and three suspected cases have been identified so far. He added that while the situation is serious, the virus is far less contagious than COVID-19, reducing the likelihood of a widespread global outbreak.

The outbreak has triggered concern after a Dutch couple, who had travelled across South America before boarding the ship in Ushuaia, Argentina, became the first fatalities. Health authorities in Argentina said they are yet to determine the origin of the infection, with investigations ongoing across provinces.

Cases linked to the ship have been reported in countries including United Kingdom, Ger-



many, Netherlands, Switzerland and South Africa, where affected individuals are either receiving treatment or isolating.

Hantavirus is a rare disease typically transmitted through infected rodents and can cause severe respiratory illness, cardiac complications, and haemorrhagic fever. There is currently no vaccine or specific cure. Officials believe one infected passenger may have contracted the virus before boarding and subsequently transmitted it to others during the voyage.

Authorities in Argentina are planning to test rodent populations in Ushuaia, from where the ship departed on April 1.

Meanwhile, efforts are underway to trace passengers and crew who may have been exposed, including those who disembarked earlier in the journey at Saint Helena.

Despite the fatalities, officials have sought to reassure the public. The government of Saint Helena said the majority of its population faces an “extremely low risk” of infection, as most residents had no direct contact with those on board.

The WHO has urged countries to maintain vigilance, strengthen surveillance, and ensure timely isolation of suspected cases to prevent further spread, while emphasising that the outbreak remains contained for now.

US Court Strikes Down Trump’s Global Tariffs

In a significant legal setback, the United States Court of International Trade has struck down former President Donald Trump’s 10% global tariffs, ruling them “invalid” and not authorised under existing law.

The judicial panel held that the administration failed to provide adequate legal justification for imposing the levies under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974. The provision allows the President to impose temporary tariffs of up to 15% for 150 days without Congressional approval, but only in cases of serious balance-of-payments difficulties.

The tariffs, imposed on February 20, 2026, came shortly after the Supreme Court of the United States invalidated a separate set of reciprocal tariffs. However, the trade court ruled that Section 122 could not be used to justify broad-based duties aimed at reducing trade deficits, as such measures fall outside its intended scope.

While the ruling offers relief to certain importers and exporters, its impact remains



limited. The court clarified that the decision applies only to the parties involved in the case, including the state of Washington and select businesses. As a result, the tariffs will continue to apply to other importers while the US government pursues an appeal.

Legal experts noted that the court refrained from issuing a nationwide injunction, instead

restricting relief to the litigants. This approach is often adopted in sensitive cases involving executive authority.

With both the reciprocal tariffs and the Section 122 tariffs now struck down, the US tariff regime is expected to revert largely to its earlier structure based on World Trade Organization norms and Most-Favoured-Nation rates. However,

uncertainty over US trade policy persists.

Analysts believe the administration may now rely more heavily on targeted measures such as Section 301 investigations and Section 232 national security tariffs. These tools could be deployed in key sectors including steel, semiconductors, automobiles, pharmaceuticals and critical minerals.

The ruling has also triggered caution among global trade partners. Some countries are reassessing their trade negotiations with the US, citing policy instability. Experts have advised India to adopt a wait-and-watch approach before finalising any bilateral trade agreement with Washington, given the evolving legal landscape and repeated judicial interventions in US tariff policies.

Despite the relief offered by the ruling, uncertainty continues to loom over global trade, with businesses and governments closely monitoring the outcome of the appeal and the future direction of US trade measures.

Iran Reviews US Messages Routed via Pakistan

Iran is reviewing diplomatic messages conveyed by the United States through Pakistan, with no decision taken yet, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said on Friday.

Baghaei confirmed that multiple communications have been received via Islamabad and are currently under examination by Iranian authorities. He said Tehran will respond only after a comprehensive assessment of the contents and broader geopolitical implications. The indirect exchange comes amid continued tensions between Iran and the United States, with both sides avoiding direct engagement. Pakistan has emerged as a key interme-

diary, facilitating backchannel communication at a sensitive time in regional diplomacy. Iranian officials indicated that the messages are being evaluated in the context of larger strategic concerns, including sanctions relief, regional stability, and security assurances. The leadership is also assessing the credibility and intent behind Washington’s outreach before taking a formal position. “There is no deadline for a response,” Baghaei said, underlining Tehran’s cautious and calculated approach. He added that any decision would be guided by national interests and evolving regional dynamics. The development sig-

nals that while formal negotiations remain stalled, diplomatic channels have not been entirely closed. Analysts say such indirect exchanges often serve as precursors to potential dialogue, though outcomes remain uncertain. Observers believe Iran’s measured response reflects its wariness of past engagements and shifting policy signals from Washington. The government is expected to continue internal consultations before making any move. With geopolitical tensions still high, the outcome of these communications could influence the trajectory of relations between the two countries and impact broader regional stability.

2 Indians Among Crew on Hantavirus-Hit Cruise, Status Unclear

At least two Indian nationals are among the crew aboard the MV Hondius, where a hantavirus outbreak has led to multiple infections and deaths, raising global health concerns.

According to reports, the Dutch-operated vessel had around 150 passengers and crew from 28 countries on board. Among them were two Indians, whose health status remains unclear as authorities continue to monitor the situation. The ship is operated by Oceanwide Expeditions and began its voyage from Ushuaia in Argentina on April 1. It is scheduled to reach the Canary Islands on May 10. The World Health Organization has confirmed five cases of

Hantavirus out of eight suspected infections, with three fatalities reported so far. Among the deceased are a Dutch couple and a German national. Investigations are ongoing to determine the source and spread of the outbreak. Health officials said dozens of passengers disembarked earlier at Saint Helena, prompting a large-scale contact tracing effort across multiple countries. Individuals who left the vessel are now being tracked and monitored by authorities across four continents. Experts have clarified that the outbreak does not indicate a pandemic. Maria Van Kerkhove noted that the virus spreads primarily through close and intimate contact,

unlike highly contagious diseases such as COVID-19 or influenza.

Passengers and crew on board have been advised to follow strict safety measures, including wearing masks and using enhanced protective equipment while caring for suspected cases. The WHO also noted that while hantavirus is typically transmitted through rodents, limited human-to-human transmission has been observed in this outbreak.

Authorities worldwide are continuing surveillance and containment efforts as the vessel proceeds toward its destination, with health agencies remaining on alert to prevent further spread.



Russia’s Alleged Plan to Boost Iran’s Drone Power Raises Concerns

A new report has suggested that Russia may be exploring ways to significantly enhance Iran’s military capabilities in its ongoing tensions with the United States, particularly through advanced drone technology.

According to the report, the plan linked to the government of Vladimir Putin involves supplying thousands of short-range fibre-optic drones along with longer-range satellite-guided drones. These systems are considered highly advanced, especially because fibre-optic drones cannot be jammed using conventional electronic warfare methods and can deliver precise strikes over distances exceeding 40 km.

The proposal is said to have been prepared by the GRU, Russia’s military intelligence wing. It reportedly includes training programmes for Iranian personnel to operate these systems effectively, suggesting a deeper level of military cooperation between the two countries.

Experts believe such technology could significantly improve Iran’s battlefield capabilities. Fibre-optic drones, already used by Russia in conflicts like Ukraine, provide high-quality real-time visuals and avoid detection by not emitting radio signals. This makes them difficult to counter and highly effective in tar-



geted operations.

The report also mentions the possibility of Russia offering satellite-guided drones equipped with communication systems similar to those developed by Elon Musk’s Starlink network, although access to such systems has previously been restricted in conflict zones like Ukraine.

Additionally, the plan is said to include recruitment and training of drone operators, potentially drawing from Iranian students in Russian uni-

versities and other groups with linguistic and regional familiarity. Each candidate would reportedly undergo strict screening.

While there is no confirmation that the proposal has been implemented, analysts say it aligns with growing strategic ties between Moscow and Tehran. Reports of similar drone technologies appearing in conflict zones such as Lebanon have further raised questions about the spread of such sys-

tems. The development, if confirmed, could mark a significant escalation in the region, potentially increasing risks for US and allied forces.

However, officials caution that much of the information remains unverified, and the full extent of cooperation between Russia and Iran is still unclear. The situation underscores the evolving nature of modern warfare, where advanced drone systems and indirect alliances are playing an increasingly decisive role.

Russia Declares Ceasefire for WWII Victory Anniversary

Russia has announced a temporary ceasefire in its ongoing conflict with Ukraine to mark the anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

The ceasefire, declared by the Russian Defence Ministry, will be in effect from midnight on May 8 until May 10. The announcement coincides with the 81st anniversary of what Russia refers to as the “Great Patriotic War,” commemorating the Soviet Union’s victory over Nazi Germany.

President Vladimir Putin had earlier indicated that a two-day ceasefire would be observed during the commemorative period. The move is being seen as symbolic, aligning with national celebrations and remembrance events across Russia.

According to the defence

ministry, Russian forces will suspend military operations during this period. The announcement was made via official communication channels, emphasising that the pause in hostilities is intended to honour the historic occasion. However, there has been no immediate confirmation from Ukrainian authorities regarding their response to the ceasefire declaration. Past instances of temporary truces have seen both sides accusing each other of violations, raising questions about how effectively the ceasefire will hold on the ground. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has continued for over two years, with intense fighting reported across several regions. While short-term ceasefires have occasionally been declared, they have rarely resulted in



World War II take place across Russia, attention will remain on whether the ceasefire leads

to any meaningful pause in hostilities or remains largely ceremonial.

Markets Slide as Geopolitical Jitters Drag Sensex Down 516 Points

Indian equity benchmarks ended sharply lower on Friday, with the BSE Sensex plunging 516 points and the Nifty 50 settling at 24,176, as renewed tensions between the United States and Iran rattled investor sentiment. Banking and financial stocks bore the brunt of the selling pressure, dragging the broader markets into negative territory.

The session remained volatile throughout the day, mirroring cautious global cues. Investors turned risk-averse amid escalating geopolitical concerns, prompting profit booking in rate-sensitive sectors. Market participants also remained wary of potential disruptions in crude oil supplies, which could have infla-

tionary implications for emerging economies like India.

Despite Friday's decline, the Nifty managed to post a modest weekly gain of about 0.74 per cent, marking its second consecutive week of advances. However, analysts noted that the broader trend remains range-bound, with the index struggling to gain strong upward momentum.

Technically, the Nifty continues to hover within a narrow band, forming small-bodied candles on daily charts, an indication of indecision among traders. The index has established a higher base near the 23,800 level, where buying interest has consistently emerged during dips.

This suggests that underlying sentiment remains cautiously optimistic, even as upside momentum appears limited.

On the higher side, the 24,500-24,600 zone is acting as a strong resistance band. This level aligns with key technical indicators, including the 61.8 per cent retracement of the recent decline from the 26,000 peak, as well as the 89-day exponential moving average. Analysts believe a decisive breakout above this range is essential to trigger a sustained rally towards the 25,000-25,100 levels.

Momentum indicators offer mixed signals. The Relative Strength Index (RSI) has been hovering near the 60 mark, indicating moderate strength

but lacking a clear bullish trigger. A sustained move above this level could reinforce upward momentum, while failure to do so may keep the index confined within its current range.

In the near term, key support for the Nifty is placed between 24,000 and 23,900, while immediate resistance is seen in the 24,350-24,500 zone. Market experts advise investors to adopt a cautious approach, suggesting that dips may continue to offer selective buying opportunities until a clear breakout emerges.

With geopolitical developments likely to remain in focus, analysts expect markets to stay volatile in the coming sessions.



West Asia Conflict Tests Wall Street's Deep Ties to Middle East Capital

Renewed geopolitical tensions in West Asia are emerging as a critical stress test for major global financial institutions, exposing Wall Street's growing dependence on capital flows and business opportunities from the Middle East.

Leading US banks and asset managers have significantly expanded their footprint in the Gulf region in recent years, drawn by sovereign wealth funds and large-scale investment mandates. However, the escalating conflict involving the United States and Iran is now threatening to disrupt these financial ties.

Wall Street firms have increasingly relied on Middle Eastern investors for capital raising, deal-making, and asset management mandates. Sovereign wealth funds from countries such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE have become key clients, deploying billions of dollars into global markets. This growing exposure has made US financial institutions more vulnerable to geopolitical instability in the region.

The renewed tensions have heightened concerns over capital flows, deal pipelines, and investment commitments. Any escalation could delay or derail major transactions, particularly in sectors such as infrastructure, technology, and energy, where Gulf investors have been actively expanding their global presence.



The broader market implications are equally significant. Geopolitical risks in West Asia have historically triggered volatility in global equities, driven largely by fluctuations in crude oil prices and investor risk sentiment. Analysts warn that disruptions in critical supply routes such as the Strait of Hormuz could push oil prices higher, fueling inflation and tightening financial conditions worldwide.

For Wall Street, the challenge lies in balancing long-term strategic partnerships with short-term geopolitical uncertainties. While the Middle East remains a vital source of capital and growth, persistent instability could force firms to reassess risk exposure

and diversify their funding sources.

Experts note that financial markets tend to react sharply to geopolitical shocks but often stabilise over time as clarity emerges. However, the current situation remains fluid, with no clear timeline for de-escalation. As a result, global financial institutions are expected to adopt a cautious approach, closely monitoring developments while safeguarding their investments.

The unfolding crisis underscores a broader reality: as global finance becomes increasingly interconnected, geopolitical fault lines are playing a more decisive role in shaping market dynamics and institutional strategies.

AirAsia Places Mega \$19 Billion Order for 150 Airbus A220-300 Aircraft

Low-cost carrier AirAsia has placed a landmark order for 150 Airbus A220-300 aircraft, marking one of the largest deals ever for the fuel-efficient narrow-body jet. The agreement, valued at approximately \$19 billion (around 1.79 lakh crore), was announced at Airbus's manufacturing facility in Mirabel, Quebec, Canada, in the presence of Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney.

The order represents the biggest single commitment for the A220 programme to date and underscores growing airline demand for more fuel-efficient and cost-effective aircraft amid rising global energy prices and operational expenses. The aircraft are designed to significantly reduce fuel consumption and carbon emissions, making them an attractive option for airlines navigating volatile fuel markets.

AirAsia said the decision to

expand its fleet with A220-300 aircraft is driven by the need to manage increasing fuel costs and operational pressures, especially in the wake of geopolitical tensions that have pushed up global energy prices. The aircraft, with a seating capacity of around 160 passengers, are also considered economically viable even on routes with moderate passenger demand.

The airline plans to deploy the A220 fleet across short to medium-haul routes in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. According to AirAsia co-founder and advisor Tony Fernandes, the carrier will continue to operate Airbus A320 and A321 aircraft for medium-range routes, while A330 aircraft will be used for long-haul destinations including Europe, Australia and North America.

Deliveries of the newly or-

dered aircraft are scheduled to begin in 2028, allowing AirAsia to gradually modernise its fleet over the coming years. The airline also indicated flexibility in expanding the order further, with provisions to scale up to as many as 300 aircraft depending on future growth and demand conditions.

The deal is also a significant milestone for Airbus, as the total orders for the A220 programme have now crossed the 1,000-unit mark. As of March 2026, Airbus has already delivered 501 A220 aircraft to 25 airlines worldwide, reflecting strong global adoption of the model.

Industry analysts view the order as part of a broader trend among global carriers prioritising fuel efficiency, lower emissions, and operational flexibility in response to persistent volatility in global energy markets.



Nippon India, HDFC MF Lead Surge in Investor Accounts in FY26

Nippon India Mutual Fund and HDFC Mutual Fund emerged as the frontrunners in adding new investor accounts in FY26, highlighting strong retail participation and a growing preference for established fund houses.

Data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India showed that four fund houses, including ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund and Tata Mutual Fund, together accounted for more than half of the total mutual fund folio additions during the financial year.

The industry added nearly 46.8 million new folios in FY26, with these four players contributing about 24 million accounts, representing roughly 51 per cent of the total additions. The concentration reflects investor preference for large, well-established asset managers with strong distribution networks and consistent performance across equity and passive investment products.



A key driver behind this surge has been robust equity market performance, coupled with rising financial awareness and increasing adoption of systematic investment plans. Digital platforms and wider distribution reach have also played a crucial role in expanding investor participation beyond metro cities.

Exchange-traded funds linked to precious metals witnessed notable traction during the year. Gold and silver ETFs attracted strong inflows as investors looked to benefit from rising bullion prices. Passive

investment options, particularly low-cost ETFs and index funds, continued to gain popularity among retail investors seeking diversified exposure.

Among the standout performers, Tata Mutual Fund recorded one of the fastest growth rates in folios, driven by demand for its commodity-linked ETF offerings and fund-of-funds products. Meanwhile, Nippon India Mutual Fund strengthened its position in the passive investment segment, particularly in precious metals

funds.

Other asset managers such as Motilal Oswal Mutual Fund, SBI Mutual Fund, Bandhan Mutual Fund, and PPFAS Mutual Fund also reported significant additions, each contributing over two million new accounts during the year. However, a few players saw a decline in folio counts amid intensifying competition and shifting investor preferences.

Market experts note that while folio growth reflects expanding retail participation, it

does not fully capture the industry's financial performance. A comprehensive assessment requires analysing net inflows and assets under management alongside folio data. The steady rise in mutual fund accounts underscores deepening financial inclusion and growing investor confidence in capital markets. As participation widens, fund houses are expected to focus on innovation, digital outreach, and investor education to sustain growth momentum.

Oil Companies Suffer 30,000 Crore Monthly Loss as Fuel Prices Remain Frozen Amid Global Oil Surge

India's state-run oil marketing companies are reportedly facing severe financial stress, with estimated monthly losses of around 30,000 crore, as retail fuel prices remain unchanged despite a sharp rise in global crude oil prices. The continuing mismatch between international oil costs and domestic pump prices has significantly widened under-recoveries for public sector refiners.

Companies such as Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd are bearing the brunt of the price freeze, which has been in place since 2022. While global crude prices have fluctuated sharply due to geopolitical tensions and supply uncertainties, domestic petrol and diesel prices have largely stayed static, forcing oil firms to absorb the additional cost burden.

Industry sources indicate that the daily losses being incurred by oil marketing companies have reached unsustainable levels, translating into billions of rupees in revenue leakage each month. The gap between procurement cost and selling price has expanded further as crude oil benchmarks remain elevated in global markets, driven by instability in key producing regions.



Although fuel prices in India are technically market-linked, they have remained effectively frozen in recent years as part of efforts to shield consumers from inflationary pressures. However, this policy has transferred the financial strain to state-owned oil companies, which are now struggling to maintain profitability and manage cash flows.

The rising under-recoveries are also impacting investment plans in the energy sector. Analysts warn that prolonged financial stress could delay capi-

tal expenditure on refinery upgrades, exploration activities and cleaner fuel transition projects. The pressure is particularly significant as oil companies are simultaneously required to invest in long-term energy transition goals.

At the same time, policymakers face a difficult balancing act. While keeping fuel prices stable has helped contain inflation and supported household budgets, it has also created structural financial stress within the energy distribution system. Any immediate correc-

tion in prices, however, carries the risk of increasing inflationary pressure across sectors such as transport, agriculture and logistics. With global oil markets expected to remain volatile due to ongoing geopolitical developments and supply-side uncertainties, the financial strain on India's oil marketing companies is unlikely to ease in the near term. The situation underscores the growing challenge of aligning consumer protection with the financial health of key public sector energy firms.

Tech Giants Flag Privacy Risks in Canada’s Encryption Bill

In a debate that blurs the line between national security and personal privacy, tech majors Apple Inc. and Meta Platforms have raised concerns over a proposed Canadian law that could potentially weaken encryption safeguards. The controversy revolves around Canada’s proposed Bill C-22, which aims to grant law enforcement agencies faster and more efficient access to digital data in criminal investigations. While authorities argue the move is essential to tackle evolving cyber threats and organized crime, technology companies warn that the implications could extend far beyond policing. At the heart of the issue is end-to-end encryption, a system that ensures only the sender and the intended recipient can read messages. This technology is widely used across platforms like WhatsApp and iMessage, and is considered a cornerstone of modern digital privacy.

Apple has cautioned that the proposed legislation could force companies to create “backdoors” in their systems—hidden access points that allow authorities to retrieve user data. According to the company, such measures would undermine the integrity of encryption, making systems vulnerable not only to government access but also to hackers and cybercriminals. Meta has echoed similar concerns, warning that the bill’s broad provisions might require companies to redesign their platforms in ways that bypass encryption altogether. This, they argue, could erode user trust and expose sensitive communications to potential misuse.

Canadian officials, however, have sought to reassure the public, stating that the bill is not intended to weaken encryption but to ensure lawful access under regulated conditions. They maintain that adequate safeguards would be in place to prevent misuse and protect civil liberties. The debate highlights a growing global dilemma: how to balance the need for security with the right to privacy. Governments worldwide have been grappling with the challenge of accessing encrypted data to combat terrorism, child exploitation, and cybercrime, while tech firms and privacy advocates stress that any compromise on encryption could have far-reaching consequences. Experts warn that even minor vulnerabilities introduced into encryption systems can be exploited on a large scale, potentially affecting millions of users. As digital communication becomes increasingly central to everyday life, the stakes in such policy decisions continue to rise. As Canada deliberates on the bill, the outcome could influence similar legislative efforts in other countries. For now, the clash between Silicon Valley and policymakers serves as a reminder that in the digital age, protecting privacy is as complex as ensuring security—and achieving both may be the toughest challenge of all.



One in 55 Million: Ethiopian Woman Delivers Quintuplets Naturally

In an extraordinary twist of fate, a woman in Ethiopia’s Harari Region has given birth to five babies naturally, an event so rare that medical experts estimate its probability at just one in 55 million.

The woman delivered quintuplets, four boys and one girl, all reported to be healthy. Doctors attending to the delivery have described the case as both remarkable and highly unusual, noting that multiple births of this scale typically occur with the assistance of fertility treatments.

What makes the story even more compelling is the mother’s long and emotional journey to parenthood. She had reportedly been trying to conceive for 12 years, enduring disappointment and uncertainty. Against all odds, she eventually became pregnant without relying on procedures such as in vitro fertilisation, which are commonly associated with higher chances of multiple births.

Medical professionals say natural quintuplet pregnancies are



exceedingly uncommon. Such cases often come with significant risks, including premature delivery, low birth weight, and complications for both the mother and the babies. However, in this instance, early reports suggest that both the mother and her newborns are doing well under careful medical supervision. The birth has sparked curiosity and admiration, not just within the region but beyond, as stories of rare natural phenomena continue to fascinate people worldwide. Experts point out that while modern reproductive technologies have made multiple births more common, naturally conceived quintuplets remain a medical rarity. Doctors are con-

tinuing to monitor the babies closely, as the first few weeks are critical for their growth and development. The family is also receiving support from healthcare workers to ensure the well-being of the newborns.

For many, the story is more than just a medical anomaly; it is a powerful reminder of resilience and hope. After more than a decade of waiting, the woman’s journey has culminated in an outcome that defies both expectation and probability.

In a world often driven by science and predictability, this rare birth underscores the enduring mystery of nature, where even the most unlikely miracles can become reality.

AI Shop Assistants Arrive: WhatsApp Unveils Smart Tool for Small Businesses

In a move that feels straight out of a futuristic marketplace, WhatsApp has rolled out a new artificial intelligence feature designed to help small businesses run smarter, faster, and round the clock.

Launched by parent company Meta Platforms, the new “Business AI” tool is aimed at transforming how small and medium enterprises interact with customers. Instead of manually replying to hundreds of messages daily, businesses can now rely on an AI-powered assistant that chats, recommends, and even closes deals.

The feature works like a virtual employee that never sleeps. It can instantly respond to customer queries, suggest products, book appointments, and resolve complaints without human intervention. For many small business owners who depend heavily on WhatsApp for orders and enquiries, this could mean a dramatic reduction in workload.

What sets this tool apart is its simplicity. Businesses can



customise the AI by linking it to their product catalogues, pricing details, and booking systems. Once set up, the assistant learns and adapts, handling conversations in a more natural and human-like manner. It can even communicate in multiple Indian languages, making it accessible to a wider user base.

Industry observers say this marks a significant shift in how digital commerce operates at the grassroots level. With

millions of small businesses already using WhatsApp as their primary communication channel, integrating AI directly into the platform removes the need for additional software or technical expertise.

Early trials have shown promising results. Some businesses reported noticeable increases in sales within weeks of deploying the AI assistant, thanks to faster response times and improved customer engagement. The tool is current-

ly being offered free of cost, lowering the barrier for adoption among small entrepreneurs.

The development also highlights a broader trend where artificial intelligence is moving beyond big corporations and becoming accessible to everyday businesses. From neighbourhood stores to home-run ventures, AI is now stepping in as a silent partner, managing conversations and boosting efficiency.

However, the shift also raises questions about how automation might reshape small business operations and customer relationships in the long run. While efficiency improves, the human touch that defines many local businesses could evolve in unexpected ways.

For now, though, WhatsApp’s Business AI feels less like a distant innovation and more like a practical upgrade, turning a simple messaging app into a powerful business tool that fits right into the palm of a shop owner’s hand.



“Changed My Perspective Forever”: Young Climber Survives Everest Avalanche

A young mountaineer’s close encounter with death on Mount Everest has turned into a gripping story of survival after a sudden avalanche struck during an expedition.

The climber was making his way up the world’s highest peak when massive sheets of snow broke loose and came crashing down the slope. Within seconds, what seemed like a routine climb turned into a life-threatening situation as visibility dropped and panic spread among fellow climbers.

Describing the terrifying moment, the survivor said the experience “changed my perspective forever,” reflecting on how quickly conditions can shift in the mountains. The avalanche, he noted, came with little warning, leaving barely any time to react.

Despite the chaos, the young climber managed to escape, surviving what could have easily turned fatal. Avalanches are among the most dangerous hazards on Everest, capable of sweeping away climbers,

equipment, and even entire camps in an instant.

Experts say such incidents are often triggered by unstable snow layers, sudden weather changes, or ice movements. The risks increase significantly at high altitudes where conditions remain unpredictable and rescue operations are extremely difficult.

For the survivor, the incident has left a lasting impact. Beyond the fear, it has reshaped his outlook on adventure and risk. What was once seen as a challenge to conquer has now become a reminder of nature’s overwhelming power.

Mount Everest continues to attract climbers from around the world, offering both glory and danger in equal measure. Each season brings stories of triumph as well as tragedy, highlighting the fine balance between ambition and survival. As the young climber reflects on his narrow escape, his words serve as a reminder that in the mountains, survival itself is the greatest victory.

Up to \$95 Back? Apple’s \$250 Million Settlement Sparks Buzz Among iPhone Users



sumers argued that they purchased devices expecting those capabilities, only to find that

the promised upgrades were not immediately accessible. Without admitting any

wrongdoing, Apple chose to settle the case, avoiding a prolonged legal battle. The settlement applies to select iPhone models sold in the United States between mid-2024 and early 2025, potentially covering millions of devices.

Under the agreement, eligible users may receive compensation ranging from \$25 to \$95 per device. The exact payout will depend on the number of claims filed, meaning individual amounts could vary if participation is high.

The case has drawn attention not just for the payout but for what it represents in the evolving tech landscape. As companies race to lead in artificial intelligence, there is increasing pressure to showcase cutting-edge features, some-

times even before they are fully ready for public use.

Industry observers say this settlement highlights the fine line between innovation and overpromising. While consumers are eager to embrace new technology, expectations can quickly turn into disputes when products fail to deliver as advertised.

For iPhone users, the settlement offers a modest financial return. For the tech industry, it serves as a cautionary tale about transparency and timing in the age of AI-driven innovation.

As the case moves toward final approval, affected customers are expected to receive details on how to file claims and access their share of the settlement.

‘Big Mistake’: Swanand Kirkire Flags Spam Call Surge, Toyota Motor Corporation Responds



the callers were only doing their jobs, the situation placed customers in an uncomfortable position. He also questioned the ethics behind such practices, asking why companies would sell or share customer data despite already profiting

from vehicle sales. The post quickly went viral, striking a chord with many users who shared similar experiences of receiving unwanted calls after making purchases or registering with services. The incident reignited concerns about data

privacy and how customer information is handled across industries.

Responding to the backlash, Toyota India issued a statement expressing regret over the inconvenience caused. The company requested Kirkire to share his contact and dealership details so its team could look into the matter and resolve the issue at the earliest.

In a follow up update, Kirkire said a company representative had reached out to him and informed that an internal case had already been filed regarding possible data leaks. He noted that even the company appeared uncertain about how such leaks might have occurred. Interestingly, the singer

also mentioned that the barrage of spam calls stopped soon after his complaint gained public attention, suggesting that corrective action may have been taken. While the immediate issue seems to have been addressed, the episode has once again highlighted a broader concern in the digital age: the vulnerability of personal data. As consumers become increasingly connected, questions around who has access to their information and how it is used continue to grow louder. For many, Kirkire’s experience serves as a reminder that data privacy is not just a technical issue but a deeply personal one, affecting everyday life in unexpected ways.

RCB’s Top-Two Hopes Dent After Defeat to LSG in IPL 2026 Thriller

Royal Challengers Bengaluru’s push for a top-two finish in IPL 2026 suffered a setback after a narrow defeat to Lucknow Super Giants in a high-intensity clash that kept playoff permutations wide open. The loss comes at a crucial stage of the league, where every point is shaping the final standings and the race for direct qualification to Qualifier 1. Lucknow Super Giants delivered a commanding performance with the bat after being asked to set a target. Their innings was anchored by a dominant top-order display, with one batter producing a standout century that put RCB under immediate pressure. The innings was built around aggressive stroke play and steady acceleration in the middle and death overs, allowing LSG to post a challenging total.

RCB’s bowling unit struggled to find consistent breakthroughs, especially in the middle phase of the innings. While a few wickets slowed the momentum briefly, the overall control remained with the batting side, who capitalised on loose deliveries and maintained a strong scoring rate throughout.

In response, RCB’s chase began on a shaky note with early wickets disrupting their top order. However, the middle order attempted to rebuild the innings with calculated aggression. A key partnership brought Bengaluru back into contention, and at one stage, the chase looked evenly balanced.

The momentum shifted again in the death overs as LSG’s bowlers executed their plans effectively under pressure. Despite a late surge from RCB’s finishers, the target proved just out of reach, resulting in a narrow defeat that could have significant implications for their playoff positioning. The result impacts RCB’s chances of finishing in the top two, a crucial advantage in the IPL playoff format that provides two opportunities to reach the final. While they remain in contention, the loss tightens the margin for error with only a few league matches left.

RCB are still placed in the upper half of the table, but the competition among multiple teams for playoff and top-two spots has intensified. With net run rate and consistency likely to play a decisive role, every upcoming match now carries added importance.

For RCB, the focus will shift to bouncing back quickly and regaining momentum before the league stage concludes. The defeat against LSG serves as a reminder of how small margins can define playoff trajectories in a tightly contested season.



Cristiano Ronaldo Scores 100th Saudi Pro League Goal as Al-Nassr Edge Closer to Title Glory

Cristiano Ronaldo has reached yet another landmark in his glittering career, scoring his 100th goal in the Saudi Pro League as Al-Nassr strengthened their push for the league title in the 2026 season.

The Portuguese superstar struck during Al-Nassr’s latest league outing against Al Shabab, where his late finish sealed a crucial win and pushed his side closer to securing the championship. The goal, coming in the second half, underlined Ronaldo’s continued influence in decisive moments despite being in the twilight of his career. Al-Nassr produced a dominant attacking display, with early breakthroughs setting the tone for a high-tempo contest. Ronaldo’s milestone strike arrived after sustained pressure, as he capitalised on a well-delivered assist inside the box to register yet another historic achievement. The goal also marked a continuation of his extraordinary consistency since joining the Saudi club. With this milestone, Ronaldo becomes one of the few players in world football to reach 100 league goals in multiple top-flight competitions, further strengthening his legacy as one of the game’s greatest scorers. His contribution has been central to Al-Nassr’s title challenge, with the team maintaining strong form in the closing stages of the season. The victory keeps Al-Nassr in a commanding position in the title race, as they edge closer to lifting the Saudi Pro League trophy. With only a handful of matches remaining, every point is now critical, but the team’s momentum and Ronaldo’s form have given them a clear edge over their rivals. Beyond the title implications, the milestone highlights Ronaldo’s remarkable longevity and adaptability. Even in a new league and environment, he continues to deliver at an elite level, consistently finding the net and guiding his team in high-pressure situations.

As Al-Nassr move into the final stretch of the season, all eyes remain on Ronaldo and whether he can add a league title in Saudi Arabia to an already unmatched collection of honours.



BCCI Issues Strict Warning to IPL Franchises Over Honey-Trap Threats and Security Breaches

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has issued a strong advisory to all IPL 2026 franchises, warning them about potential “honey-trap” risks and tightening security protocols across team environments, including hotels, travel, and match venues.

According to the directive, the BCCI has flagged serious concerns over unauthorized individuals gaining access to restricted areas such as team hotels, dressing rooms, team buses, and players’ personal spaces. The board has cautioned franchises that such breaches could pose not only security threats but also legal and integrity-related risks during the high-profile tournament.

The advisory reportedly comes after multiple instances of protocol violations were observed by the BCCI’s Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU). These included unauthorised persons travelling with teams, entering hotel premises, and interacting with players and support staff without proper clearance. The board has described these developments as “irregularities” that need immediate corrective action from franchises.

In its communication, the BCCI has made it clear that all franchises will be held accountable for enforcing strict compliance. Team managements have been instructed to ensure that only accredited personnel are allowed access to players and officials, with no exceptions. The board has also stressed that violations in the future will invite stringent disciplinary action.

One of the key concerns highlighted in the advisory is the risk of targeted compromise of players through external influences, often referred to as honey-trap situations. The BCCI has urged teams to remain vigilant and ensure that players are not exposed to unnecessary or unverified contacts during the season.

Additionally, the board has reinforced existing security norms, including tighter hotel entry rules, mandatory accreditation checks, and restrictions on movement of non-team members within secured zones.

The advisory also reflects the BCCI’s broader push to maintain the integrity of the IPL, which remains one of the most closely monitored cricket leagues in the world. With multiple high-profile stakeholders involved, the governing body has consistently tightened regulations in recent seasons to address off-field risks.

As IPL 2026 progresses, franchises are now expected to implement the new guidelines immediately, with compliance likely to be reviewed closely by the BCCI throughout the tournament.



KSCA’s Request for Extra Complimentary Tickets Sparks Controversy in IPL 2026 Decision

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has reportedly cited the Karnataka State Cricket Association’s (KSCA) demand for additional complimentary tickets as one of the key factors behind the shift of IPL 2026 playoff and final matches away from Bengaluru.

According to sources, KSCA had requested nearly 10,057 additional complimentary tickets over and above the standard allocation permitted under IPL guidelines. This development has triggered widespread discussion within cricket administration circles and is believed to have influenced the BCCI’s decision to move marquee knockout fixtures, including the final, to other venues.

Under IPL hosting rules, state associations are entitled to a fixed percentage of complimentary tickets based on stadium capacity. However, the KSCA’s reported request exceeded this norm significantly, including allocations for association members, affiliated clubs, and various stakeholder groups. The request also reportedly included tickets earmarked for political representatives and government-linked allocations, further escalating concerns within the BCCI.

The issue gained traction during internal discussions on venue allocations for the playoff stage. While Bengaluru’s M. Chinnaswamy Stadium was initially considered a strong candidate to host high-profile knockout matches, the ticketing controversy appears to have weighed heavily in the final decision-making process.

The BCCI, while not issuing a detailed public statement on the matter, has maintained that all venue selections for IPL playoffs and the final are made based on established guidelines, operational feasibility, and adherence to tournament protocols.

The decision has come as a disappointment for the KSCA, which had expressed readiness and enthusiasm to host the playoffs and the final in Bengaluru, especially given the strong home support for Royal Challengers Bengaluru. However, logistical concerns and compliance with ticket distribution norms are understood to have taken precedence.

The controversy also adds to ongoing discussions around ticket allocations in the IPL, where demand for complimentary and VIP tickets often becomes a point of friction between franchises, associations, and governing bodies.

With the IPL 2026 playoffs now scheduled across alternative venues, the focus will shift back to on-field action. Yet, the KSCA episode has once again highlighted the growing tension between administrative demands and tournament governance standards in India’s most-watched cricket league.



‘Labbaru Bomma’ Adds Mass Buzz to Anakapalli

The makers of the upcoming rustic entertainer Anakapalli have released a high-energy mass number titled “Labbaru Bomma,” further amplifying the film’s growing buzz. Produced by Kandregula Naidu and Thrinadha Rao Nakkina under the banners of Bhavya Sri Movie Makers and Nakkina Narratives, the film is directed by Khagesh Tammineni and promises a wholesome commercial package.

Featuring Tarak Ponnappa and Nandini Rai, “Labbaru Bomma” is designed as a vibrant, foot-tapping number aimed squarely at mass audiences. Tarak Ponnappa showcases impressive dance moves with electrifying energy, while Nandini Rai adds glamour and screen presence, making the song visually appealing. The track is choreographed by Yash Master, whose dynamic composition enhances the song’s lively appeal.

Penned by Rambabu Gosala, the lyrics strike a chord with their catchy and colloquial flavor.



The music, composed by Devzand, stands out with its pulsating beats and addictive rhythm. Singers Sri Krishna and Sahithi Chaganti bring the track to life with energetic vocals, making “Labbaru Bomma” an instant crowd-pleaser. The song is expected to perform strongly across digital platforms and join the list of popular mass numbers this season.

Earlier, the devotional track “Ammoru Diginadhi” from the

film gained significant traction on YouTube, setting high expectations for the album. With “Labbaru Bomma” now out, the makers seem confident of delivering another chart-buster that will resonate with both youth and mass audiences.

Anakapalli stars Vikram Sahidev and Sandhya Vasishtha in the lead roles, supported by a diverse ensemble cast including Thrinadha Rao Nakkina, Indraja Absar, Mahaboob Ba-

sha, Srinivas Vadlamani, Kandregula Naidu, Nandini Rai, and Sangeetha Krish. Interestingly, Thrinadha Rao Nakkina has also penned the story and screenplay while playing a key role in the film.

On the technical front, cinematography is handled by Maaya V, promising a raw and earthy visual tone that complements the film’s backdrop. Editing is overseen by Srikrishna Attaluri, while dialogues are written by Uday Bhagavatula. The production design by Raghu Kulakarni adds authenticity to the setting.

Blending action-packed sequences for mass appeal, a youthful romantic track, and emotionally engaging moments for family audiences, Anakapalli is gearing up for a theatrical release soon. An official release date announcement is expected in the coming days, as the makers continue to build momentum with promotional content.

RISING STAR

Swati Ghatkar



Chiranjeevi’s Fun Visit Lights Up Peddi Sets

The team of Peddi, director Buchi Babu Sana’s much-anticipated rural action drama starring Ram Charan, has delighted fans by sharing a special behind-the-scenes video featuring Chiranjeevi’s memorable visit to the film’s sets.

Taking to Instagram, Buchi Babu Sana described the moment as one of his “best memories,” calling Chiranjeevi both “The BOSS and my GURU.” The video captures the Megastar arriving on set and interacting warmly with the cast and crew. Light-hearted moments unfold as Chiranjeevi chats with director Sukumar, cinematographer R. Rathnavelu, and Ram Charan. In a playful sequence, Buchi Babu Sana, Sukumar, and Ram



Charan flex their biceps while Chiranjeevi records them, prompting Ram Charan to joke about the director’s impressive physique. The release of the video comes shortly after the makers announced that shooting for Peddi had been wrapped on May 1. Rathnavelu shared an emotional note marking the end of the shoot, praising Ram

Charan as a “powerhouse performer” and a “wonderful friend,” while expressing gratitude for the creative journey.

The film has been generating significant buzz since its announcement, with its final schedule including the shoot of a grand special song. Sources reveal that the number, composed by A. R. Rahman, was

filmed in Hyderabad on an elaborate set and promises a “surprise element” designed to thrill audiences. With its energetic choreography and large-scale presentation, the song is expected to be a major highlight and a chart-topping hit.

Slated for release on June 4, Peddi features an impressive ensemble cast. Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor plays the female lead, while veteran actors Shiva Rajkumar, Jagapathi Babu, Divyenndu, and Boman Irani appear in pivotal roles. Technically, Peddi boasts a strong crew. Rathnavelu handles cinematography, promising striking visuals, while Navin Nooli is in charge of editing. Production designer Avinash Kolla has crafted the

film’s grand sets, adding scale and authenticity to the rural backdrop.

With a powerful cast, acclaimed technicians, and growing anticipation, Peddi is shaping up to be one of the most awaited Telugu releases of the year.



‘Rao Bahadur’ Locks July 3 Release

The much-anticipated psychological drama Rao Bahadur, starring Satya Dev, is all set for a worldwide theatrical release on July 3. Presented by Mahesh Babu and Namrata Shirodkar under GMB Entertainment, the film is jointly produced by A+S Movies and SriChakraas Entertainments.

Directed by the unconventional filmmaker Venkatesh Maha, who also handles writing and editing, the film has been generating strong buzz since its first glimpse. The recently released single “O Sundari” further elevated expectations, with its vintage aesthetic, soulful melody, and visually rich presentation transporting audiences to a bygone era.

The makers recently unveiled a new poster while announcing the release date, offering a deeper look into the film’s intriguing world. Satya Dev is seen in a striking elderly avatar, dressed in royal-purple attire and adorned with layered pearls, exuding the aura of a powerful aristocrat. The intricate detailing — from the ornate background to the traditional accessories — enhances the film’s atmospheric tone. His intense expression hints at a narrative layered with secrets, legacy, and psychological

depth.

Actress Deepa Thomas plays the female lead, while Vikas Muppala, Bala Parasar, Anand Bharathi, Pranay Vaka, and Master Kiran feature in key roles, adding strength to the ensemble cast.

On the technical front, Rao Bahadur is backed by a skilled crew. Cinematographer Kartik Parmar is expected to bring a visually immersive experience, capturing the grandeur and mood of the aristocratic setting. Music composer Smaran Sai lends a hauntingly evocative score, while production designer Rohan Singh has crafted elaborate sets that reflect the richness and decay of a royal past.

With its blend of psychological intrigue, period grandeur, and emotionally layered storytelling, Rao Bahadur promises a cinematic experience that goes beyond conventional narratives. The film is expected to explore themes of legacy, hidden truths, and the lingering shadows of an aristocratic world.

As the countdown to its July 3 release begins, the makers are likely to unveil more promotional content in the coming weeks, further building anticipation among audiences and film enthusiasts.

Urvashi Rautela Opens Up on Her Intense Return in Inspector Avinash 2

Mumbai: Actress Urvashi Rautela is gearing up to reprise her role as Poonam Mishra in the second season of the action crime thriller Inspector Avinash, and she says the emotional core of her character this time is defined by “survival wrapped in silence.”

Sharing insights into her role, Urvashi explained that beneath the high-octane action and crime-driven narrative lies a deeply emotional journey. “In crime dramas, people often focus on violence and power, but underneath, there is fear, emotional isolation, and the need to protect oneself. My character carries that conflict internally,” she said.

What makes Poonam Mishra compelling, according to the actress, is her quiet resilience. Unlike typical portrayals driven by overt emotions, Poonam is shaped by restraint and endurance. Urvashi noted that her character’s strength lies in silently navigating turmoil while maintaining emotional balance. “Sometimes strength isn’t about aggression, but about holding yourself together in the face of adversity,” she added.

The series, headlined by Randeeep Hooda, first premiered in 2023 and received attention for its gritty storytelling. Directed by Neeraj Pathak, the show is inspired by real-life events and follows the journey of Uttar Pradesh super-cop Avinash Mishra as he battles rising crime. The first season featured a strong ensemble cast including Amit Sial, Shalin Bhanot, Zakir Hussain, Bidita Bag, and Rajneesh Duggal, among others.

Urvashi’s return in the second season is expected to add emotional depth to the narrative, balancing the intense action with a nuanced portrayal of personal struggle and resilience.

The actress, who made her debut opposite Sunny Deol in Singh Saab the Great, has had a varied career with films like Sanam Re and Great Grand Masti. She recently witnessed a resurgence in popularity with the 2025 film Daaku Maharaaj, starring Nandamuri Balakrishna. Her



Telangana’s Rashmi Thakur Heads to Cannes 2026

Hyderabad: In a proud moment for Telangana, model and achiever Rashmi Thakur has been selected to attend the prestigious Cannes Film Festival 2026, marking her debut on one of the world’s most celebrated cinematic platforms.

Hailing from Karimnagar district in Telangana, Rashmi Thakur has steadily built an impressive profile in the fashion and social advocacy space. She first gained national recognition after winning the Miss Planet India title in 2016. Over the years, she has added multiple accolades to her name, including Miss Andhra Pradesh 2014 and Mrs Telangana at the Mrs South India pageant. Her achievements extend to international platforms as well, with titles such as Miss Asia Pacific International (2017, Malaysia) and Miss India Star Universe (2018, USA).

Rashmi’s journey is marked not just by beauty pageant success but also by her active involvement in social and cultural initiatives. She has served as a brand ambassador for Telangana Tourism and has been associated with the promotion of national handloom initiatives under the Ministry of Textiles. In addition, she has worked closely with organizations focused on mental health awareness and suicide prevention, acting as an official spokesperson for anti-suicide campaigns.

Her contributions have earned her several recognitions, including a doctorate honor from Peace Karnataka and the Young Achiever Award from Karnataka University. Rashmi currently holds key positions in various organizations, serving as President of the World Women Federation and as a member of international human rights bodies. She is also actively involved in advocating for handloom weavers’ rights and participates in global peace initiatives, including in-

tergenerational dialogue forums.

With her upcoming appearance at the Cannes Film Festival 2026, Rashmi Thakur is set to represent Telangana on an international stage, bringing attention to her state’s cultural identity and her own multifaceted journey. Her participation is expected to inspire many young aspirants from the region, highlighting how dedication and perseverance can open doors to global recognition.

As she prepares to walk the iconic red carpet, Rashmi Thakur’s presence at Cannes stands as a testament to her achievements and her commitment to making a difference beyond the world of glamour.

