

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
H 27° C L 14° C	H 30° C L 19° C	H 26° C L 21° C

Centre Grants Z-Category Security Cover to Dalai Lama

- CRPF VIP security wing assigned to protect the Tibetan spiritual leader.
- About 30 CRPF commandos will guard him in shifts.
- Security review by intelligence agencies led to the decision.
- BJP leader Sambit Patra also provided Z-category cover in Manipur.

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Union government has granted Z-category security cover to Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama, citing potential threats, official sources confirmed on Thursday. The VIP security wing of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been directed to take charge of his protection.

The 89-year-old leader was previously guarded by the Himachal Pradesh Police, with additional security provided by local police during his visits to Delhi or other cities. Following a security review by central intelligence agencies, the government has now ensured a uniform security arrangement across the country.

A team of about 30 CRPF commandos will be deployed in shifts to secure the Dalai Lama. In a similar move, the Centre has also extended Z-category security to BJP leader Sambit Patra in Manipur, given the state's ongoing ethnic violence.



President's Rule imposed in Manipur

TPN Correspondent | Manipur

The central government has imposed President's Rule in Manipur, days after BJP leader and former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh resigned amid ongoing ethnic violence. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued an official notification on Thursday confirming the decision.

Manipur has been grappling with ethnic conflict between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities since May 2023, leading to over 200 deaths and widespread unrest.

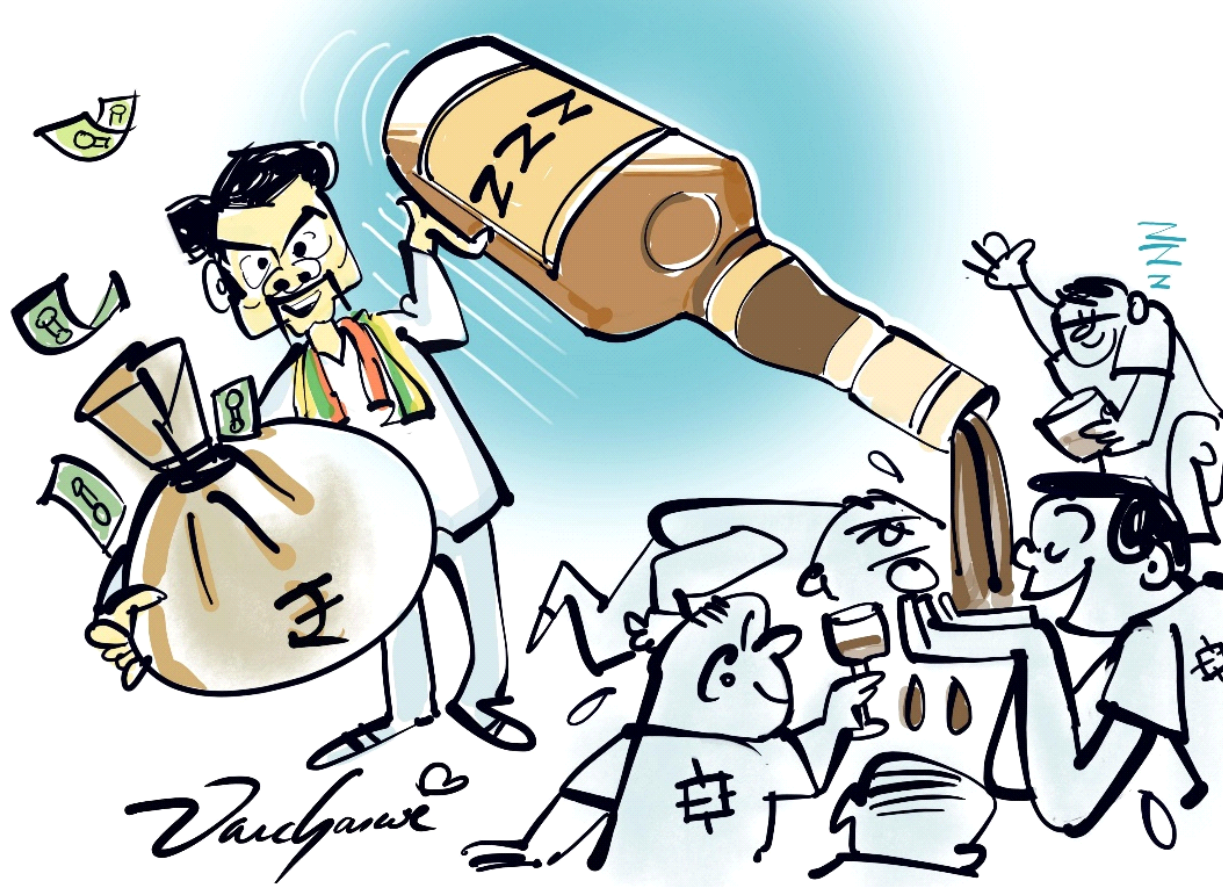
Official Notification Cites Constitutional Breakdown

In the official proclamation, President Droupadi Murmu cited a constitutional breakdown as the reason for assuming direct control over the state's administration. The order, issued under Article 356 of the Constitution, grants Parliament the authority to exercise legislative powers for the state.

"I, Droupadi Murmu, President of India, have received a report from the Governor of the State of Manipur and after considering the report and other information received by me, I am satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of that State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution," the notification stated.

Political Developments Preceding the Move The BJP-led government in Manipur faced instability after the Conrad Sangma-led National People's Party (NPP) withdrew support in November 2024. With no consensus on Biren Singh's successor, the leadership crisis intensified, leading to mounting demands from the opposition and civil society for the imposition of President's Rule.

BOSS IS TREND SETTER IN CORRUPTION... ?



- ₹5 lakh monthly extortion from 19 liquor shops.
- Direct control over two liquor shops in Jeelugumilli and Rachannagudem.
- Allowing illegal belt shops in return for commissions.
- Collecting ₹1 crore from liquor businesses as a birthday "gift."
- Selling Farmers' Cooperative Society president posts for ₹5 lakh each.

TPN Correspondent Polavaram, Feb 14

Betting, drugs, land deals, liquor MLA Chirri Balaraju has allegedly shown great creativity in extorting money in the agency areas. He is now facing public outrage after his activities were exposed by POINT. As previously stated, these allegations are too vast to cover in a single report. So far, two investigative reports have been released, and this third report focuses on liquor businesses, R&R land, and farmers' cooperative societies.

As we all know, the new government has introduced a revised liquor policy and conducted online tenders for liquor shops. In

Polavaram constituency, there are 21 liquor shops. It is alleged that MLA Chirri Balaraju managed to secure one liquor shop in Jeelugumilli under his relatives' name and forcibly took control of another in Rachannagudem. These two shops are allegedly operated directly by the MLA. For the remaining 19 liquor shops, he initially demanded a 20% stake, but the majority of shop owners refused. As a result, a compromise was reached, under which he allegedly collects ₹5 lakh per month from each shop. Reports suggest that he now receives ₹95 lakh per month from these 19 liquor shops, in addition to his earnings from the two shops



he controls. Beyond these 21 authorized liquor shops, countless illegal belt shops have allegedly been permitted to operate under the MLA's influence, from which he is earning commissions. Moreover, on his birthday, he allegedly collected ₹5 lakh from each liquor shop as a "gift," adding up to ₹1 crore on top of his regular income. With no elections being held for Farmers' Cooperative Societies in the state, they have become another source of income for the MLA. Allegedly, he charges ₹5 lakh per society to appoint presidents. We can look into the personal character and attitude of the MLA in the next story.



AP Dy CM Visits Sri Adikumbheswara Swamy

TPN Correspondent Kumbakonam, Feb 14

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan visited Sri Adikumbheswara Swamy temple in Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, as part of his Dakshinadhi pilgrimage. Following temple tradition, he first offered prayers to Adivinayaka, seeking blessings before proceeding to worship Sri Adikumbheswara Swamy. The temple priests conducted special rituals and presented him with sacred offerings from the deity.

Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan was accompanied by his son Akira Nandan and TTD Board member Anand Sai during the visit. Devotees and temple authorities warmly welcomed him as he took part in the spiritual proceedings.

Upon his arrival in Kumbakonam, BJP Tamil Nadu leaders extended a grand welcome, greeting him with flower garlands and shawls as a mark of respect. Party cadres gathered in large numbers to show their support, creating an enthusiastic atmosphere around his visit. Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan also took the time to interact with Telugu students who had come to meet him at the temple. Encouraging the young visitors, he posed for selfies, creating a memorable experience for them. His warm interaction with the students and devotees further highlighted his strong public connect and popularity beyond Andhra Pradesh.

The Deputy CM's pilgrimage to the renowned temple is seen as part of his spiritual commitment, adding significance to the occasion.

Former Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi Arrested in TDP Office Attack Case

TPN Correspondent Andhra Pradesh, Feb 14

Former Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi has been arrested by Vijayawada police at Gachibowli, Hyderabad in connection with the attack on the Gannavaram Telugu Desam Party (TDP) office. Vamsi is listed as Accused No. 71 (A71) in the case, where the complainant, Satyavardhan, a computer operator at the TDP office, alleged that cars were set on fire and he was subjected to caste-based insults during the attack.

The police identified 88 accused in their initial investigation. However, recent developments revealed a conspiracy to manipulate witness testimony. Two days ago, Satyavardhan retracted his statement, claiming no caste-related insults had occurred. This raised suspicions, leading the police to monitor him closely. The real story surfaced when his mother and brother, Kiran, approached the police, alleging that Vamsi's followers had kidnapped and threatened Satyavardhan, offering ₹10 lakh to change his testimony before the judge.

Investigations revealed that Satyavardhan had fled to Visakhapatnam out of fear. His family lodged a complaint at Padamata police station, prompting further action. Police traced five of Vamsi's close aides in a police vehicle before Satyavardhan's court appearance. Two more individuals, Komma Kotlu, Ramakrishna, and Veerajju, were identified through mobile phone tracking and bank transactions, confirming that ₹10 lakh had been transferred to Satyavardhan's account as part of the bribe. Police teams conducted simultaneous operations, arresting Vamsi's followers and dispatching teams to Vizag and Hyderabad to track him.

"Tourists Should Feel Happy in AP"

TPN Correspondent Amaravati, Feb 14

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has emphasized that Andhra Pradesh should be a state where tourists feel happy and excited to visit. Conducting a review on the tourism sector's development, he directed officials to set a target of 20% growth in the industry this year. He insisted that the sector should contribute significantly to the state's economic progress, making AP a top destination for travelers.

The Chief Minister stressed the need for world-class tourism facilities and outlined plans to develop Gandikota, Suryalanka, and



Lambasingi as tent cities. These locations, known for their scenic landscapes, will soon offer eco-friendly accommodations, adventure tourism, and better amenities to attract a large number of domestic and international tourists. He directed officials to ensure these developments are

completed efficiently, providing tourists with a comfortable and immersive experience. Tourism and cultural activities will be conducted as per a structured event calendar, ensuring that major festivals,



Dy CM Pawan Kalyan visited Sri Armuliga Subrahmanya Swamy temple in Madurai

- Special rituals were performed as part of his spiritual journey.
- Devotees gathered in large numbers to catch a glimpse of the leader.

TPN Correspondent
Madurai, Feb 14

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister and Jana Sena Party Chief Pawan Kalyan visited the Sri Armuliga Subrahmanya Swamy temple in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, as part of his spiritual journey. The temple priests conducted special prayers and rituals, invoking divine blessings. Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan participated in the ceremonies with utmost devotion, offering his respects to the deity.

His arrival at the temple was met with enthusiasm from devotees, who gathered in large numbers to witness his visit. Many were eager to interact with him, and he was warmly received by the temple authorities and locals.

Deputy CM Pawan Kalyan's visit to the sacred temple is seen as a part of his Dakshinadhri pilgrimage, reinforcing his spiritual beliefs while also resonating with the cultural traditions of the region. His presence attracted significant attention, with many devotees and supporters expressing their admiration.



Municipal and Finance Departments Discuss Budget Allocations



TPN Correspondent
Amaravati, Feb 14

A crucial meeting between the municipal and finance departments was held in Amaravati to discuss budget allocations for the upcoming financial year. The meeting saw the participation of Finance Minister Payyavula Keshav, Municipal Minister Ponguru Narayana, and senior officials from both departments.

During the discussions, officials presented detailed proposals on the required allocations for municipal development. Minister Narayana emphasized the importance of the municipal department, highlighting its role in urban development across the state, including Amaravati. He urged the finance department to prioritize allocations to ensure efficient urban planning, infrastructure improvement, and better public services.

The finance department is expected to review the proposals before finalizing the budgetary allocations for the municipal sector.

Five-Day Police Custody for Accused in Adulterated Ghee Case

- SIT teams continue searches in Chennai and Uttarakhand.
- More arrests likely as the investigation progresses.



TPN Correspondent
Tirupati, Feb 14

In a major development in the Srivari laddu adulterated ghee case, the Tirupati Sec-



ond Additional Munsif Court has ordered that the four arrested accused be remanded in five-day police custody. The accused, AR Dairy MD Raju Rajasekharan, Bholebaba Organic Dairy Directors Vipin Jain and

Pomil Jain, and Vaishnavi Dairy CEO Apoorva Chavda, will now be interrogated further by the authorities.

Meanwhile, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) has intensified searches in Chennai and Uttarakhand, targeting the houses and offices of those involved in the case. Investigators suspect that the adulteration racket extends beyond these locations, and sources indicate that more individuals have already been detained as part of the ongoing probe.

The case has raised serious concerns as it involves the supply of adulterated ghee for the preparation of Srivari laddu at Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD). The SIT is focusing on identifying the full network behind the scandal, including suppliers and intermediaries. Officials are closely examining financial transactions and supply chain records to determine the scale of the malpractice.

Authorities have assured that strict action will be taken against those responsible. Further arrests are expected as the investigation progresses.

"Tourists Should Feel Happy in AP"

Continued from page 1

heritage celebrations, and adventure tourism events are well-organized and widely promoted. He urged officials to create a roadmap where events are planned systematically throughout the year, ensuring consistent tourist footfall in key locations. Special focus will be given to heritage sites, temple tourism, beach destinations, and hill stations, making AP an attractive choice for travelers.

Chandrababu Naidu emphasized that infrastructure improvements should go hand in hand with tourism promotion. He instructed officials to focus on better road, rail, and air connectivity to major tourist destinations, ensuring seamless travel experiences for visitors. Cleanliness, safety, and hospitality services should be enhanced to match global standards. Special tourism zones will be created where local businesses and artisans can benefit from increased tourist activity, contributing to employment generation in the sector.

The CM expressed confidence that with proper planning and execution, Andhra Pradesh could emerge as a top tourism hub in India. He directed officials to monitor the progress of tourism projects regularly and take necessary steps to eliminate bureaucratic hurdles in their execution. He also suggested adopting best practices from successful tourism models worldwide to ensure rapid development.

Reiterating his vision, Chandrababu Naidu said Andhra Pradesh has immense potential to become a tourism powerhouse with its rich heritage, stunning landscapes, and vibrant culture. He urged officials to work with dedication, ensuring that every tourist visiting the state leaves with unforgettable experiences.

No Bird Flu Cases in AP – Minister Atchannaaidu



TPN Correspondent
Amaravati, Feb 14

AP Agriculture Minister Atchannaaidu has dismissed reports suggesting a bird flu case in Unguturu, stating that no one in Andhra Pradesh has been infected. Addressing the media, he assured that there is no health risk in consuming properly cooked chicken and eggs. He emphasized that the state government is closely monitoring the situation and urged the public not to panic. The minister revealed that the government has been in discussions with the central authorities and scientific experts to assess and contain the situation. He clarified that

while special zones have been identified in areas where bird flu cases have been reported elsewhere, Andhra Pradesh remains free of infections. Atchannaaidu strongly criticized certain media outlets for spreading fear and misinformation regarding bird flu. He warned that strict action would be taken against those publishing misleading reports that create unnecessary panic among the people. He reaffirmed that the poultry industry in the state is operating under strict safety measures, and there is no evidence linking bird flu to cooked poultry consumption. The public is advised to rely only on official government statements and avoid believing unverified news.

No New Agro-Processing Clusters Approved for 2024-25

- 7 agro-processing clusters approved in AP over the past five years.
- No new approvals for 2024-25, Union Minister confirms.
- Government to expedite implementation of sanctioned projects.

TPN Correspondent
New Delhi, Feb 14

The Union Minister of State for Food Processing Industries, Rav Neet Singh Veladi, has confirmed that no new agro-processing clusters have been approved in Andhra Pradesh for the financial year 2024-25. He provided this information in response to a query from MP Kesineni Shivanath (Chinni) in the Lok Sabha.

Over the past five years, seven agro-processing clusters have been approved in Andhra Pradesh. However, no clusters were sanctioned during the financial years 2019-20, 2020-21, and 2021-22. The Centre approved two projects in 2022-23, namely Charan Biotech Private Limited in Anantapur district and Gamma Biotech Farms in NTR district. Additionally, five more clusters were approved in 2023-24 in Eluru, Nellore, East Godavari, Vizianagaram, and Rangareddy districts. The Union Minister stated that the sanctioned projects are in various stages of implementation. The Central Government provides financial assistance of up to ₹10 crore per project, and efforts are being made to expedite their execution. Since the Agro-Processing Cluster (APC) scheme



is demand-driven, the government accepts new project proposals through the "Sampada" portal. Industrialists and agro-processing companies can apply for approvals via Expression of Interest (EoI) when announced by the Central Government. In the past five years, over 25 project proposals have been submitted from Andhra Pradesh. While some of these proposals have been sanctioned or are under processing, no new clusters have been approved for the current financial year.

Political Tensions Escalate in Denduluru Over Clash Between Chintamaneni and Abbayya Chowdhury



- Clash between Sitting MLA and former MLA at a wedding.
- Chintamaneni alleges a pre-planned attack by YSRCP leaders.
- Police tighten security amid rising political tensions in Denduluru.

**TPN Correspondent
Denduluru, Feb 14**

A heated altercation between Denduluru MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar and former YSRCP MLA Kotharu Abbayya Chowdhury has sparked political tensions in the constituency. The incident, which took place at a wedding function in Vatnur on Wednesday night, has led to unrest in

several areas.

According to reports, a confrontation erupted when Chintamaneni allegedly blocked Abbayya Chowdhury's vehicle, leading to an argument between their respective supporters. Chintamaneni claims that YSRCP leaders launched a pre-planned attack on him, while Abbayya Chowdhury contends that his supporters

merely reacted to abusive remarks.

Following the incident, Chintamaneni's driver, Sudheer, lodged a complaint at Eluru Three Town Police Station, alleging that the MLA, his driver, and gunmen were attacked with iron rods. The police are investigating the claims, but the exact cause of the dispute remains unclear.

On Thursday, Chintamaneni met with District SP Shiva Kishore and detailed his version of the events. He alleged that Abbayya Chowdhury's driver deliberately blocked his car and verbally abused his staff, prompting his reaction.

Escalating Political Tensions

TDP leaders claim that around 25 people, including Abbayya Chowdhury, were involved in the attack on Chintamaneni. The police, alerted by reports of an assassination attempt, have heightened security to prevent further clashes.

Meanwhile, Abbayya Chowdhury refuted the allegations, stating that Chintamaneni insulted his driver, who belongs to the BC community, sparking the altercation. He criticized Chintamaneni's behavior, questioning, "Won't you change your ways? When will you learn manners?" With just nine months into the coalition government's tenure, the political rivalry in Denduluru has intensified, leading to concerns about further unrest in the constituency.

When YSRCP talks About illegal Arrests, It Is Like Demons Reciting the Vedas - Konakalla Narayana



**TPN Correspondent
Mangalagiri, Feb 14**

RTC Chairman Konakalla Narayana has strongly criticized the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), accusing it of fostering a culture of filing illegal cases to suppress political opponents. Speaking at a media conference at the TDP central office, he condemned YSRCP leaders for alleging that the NDA government is engaging in political vendetta while ignoring their own past actions. Konakalla Narayana pointed out that YSRCP had misused power to target opposition leaders, filing false cases against Chandrababu Naidu, Kollu Ravindra, and Atchannaaidu. He called out the double standards of YSRCP leaders, stating:

"Those who falsely arrested opposition leaders for years are now crying foul over legal action against Vallabhaneni Vamsi."

Recalling an incident in 2023, Narayana stated that a mob led by Vamsi attacked the TDP office in Gannavaram, setting fire to cars, destroying computers, and vandalizing furniture. He accused the then YSRCP government of turning a blind eye despite clear evi-

dence.

He also revealed that Satyavardhan, a Scheduled Caste employee at the office, was kidnapped and threatened to weaken the complaint against the attackers. He alleged that YSRCP's intimidation tactics extended to Dalit communities, suppressing witnesses and manipulating evidence. Konakalla Narayana alleged that ₹4,000 crore was looted in Gannavaram during Vamsi's tenure, accusing him of:

Illegally excavating lakhs of cubic meters of soil from the Polavaram canal. Selling soil from Brahmalingam tank and airport lands without a trace. Issuing fake land titles and deceiving the people.

He demanded a thorough investigation into Vamsi's corruption, stating that everyone is equal before the law and must be punished for their crimes.

Criticizing YSRCP's hypocrisy, Narayana said: "When YSRCP talks about illegal arrests, it is like demons reciting the Vedas." He reminded that Nara Lokesh, Kollu Ravindra, and Yarlagadda Venkata Rao were falsely implicated and obstructed during their political activities, further proving that YSRCP's culture is based on filing false cases.

Konakalla Narayana urged the government to ensure that Vamsi and others involved in corruption and violence face legal consequences, bringing justice to victims of YSRCP's oppression.

'Four More Beasts Like Vallabhaneni Vamsi Should Be Arrested' - MLA Somireddy



**TPN Correspondent
Nellore, Feb 14**

The arrest of YCP leader Vallabhaneni Vamsi by Vijayawada police has triggered a political storm in Andhra Pradesh. Vamsi was arrested in Hyderabad and is currently being transported to Vijayawada, with the police convoy have reached Vijayawada. Authorities have tightened security in Gannavaram in anticipation of potential unrest, deploying police pickets to maintain order.

Reacting strongly to the arrest, TDP MLA Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy launched a scathing attack on Vamsi, labeling him "a beast rather than a human." Somireddy remarked that if Vamsi had used the same language in faction-prone areas, he would have been killed. He accused Vamsi of resorting to theatrics during his ar-

rest, deliberately delaying the process by changing clothes, making phone calls, and inciting his followers to create riots. Somireddy also recalled the violent incidents at the **Gannavaram TDP office, alleging that:**

Furniture was destroyed.

Cars were set on fire.

An attempt was made to kill people.

A computer operator who filed a complaint was threatened.

Somireddy further asserted that Vamsi's life had been spared and insisted that punishing him was necessary for the welfare of society. He also demanded the arrest of four more individuals whom he likened to Vamsi, without naming them explicitly.

As Vamsi is being brought to Vijayawada, political tensions remain high, and further developments are being closely watched.

Vamsi's Behavior Will Make Society Hang Its Head: MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao

"Jagan Welcomed a Rowdy Into His Party"



**TPN Correspondent
Mangalagiri, Feb 14**

Gannavaram MLA Yarlagadda Venkata Rao launched a blistering attack on Vallabhaneni Vamsi, accusing him of corruption, land scams, and misconduct that tarnished the region's reputation. Speaking at a media conference at the TDP central office on Thursday, Yarlagadda expressed disappointment that someone born on a land of great personalities had defiled it with his actions.

Yarlagadda alleged that for the past 10 years, illegal soil excavation had taken place in Gannavaram, with Vamsi at the center of it. He claimed that when the Telugu Desam government allocated funds for the Gannavaram project, Vamsi misused them for personal gains.

He further questioned Jagan Mohan Reddy's decision to take Vamsi into YSRCP, stating: "What did Jagan see in Vamsi to bring him into the party? Today, the people have not even given Jagan the opposition status. If Chandrababu had to compromise to lose his status, he would not do it. Character matters to me, but Jagan encourages a toxic political culture."

The MLA accused Vamsi of illegally grabbing common sites through unlawful layouts,

seizing lands along roads in Vijayawada Rural Mandal, and making it impossible for villages to have legally sanctioned layouts.

Additionally, he blamed Vamsi for:

Selling Brahmananda Lake and illegally excavating Polavaram soil, which he claimed led to recent flooding in Ambapuram.

Corrupt activities in airport land dealings in Gannavaram. Manipulating land records with the involvement of former MRO Narasimhu and officer Madhuri.

Yarlagadda accused YSRCP leader Thota Venkaiah of obstructing a document writer and engaging in numerous corrupt activities. He demanded a government investigation into the MROs who worked in the region for the past decade.

He also alleged that Vamsi fabricated cases against his own loyalists when he was in TDP, questioning: "Is it true that Narasaiah's house was attacked? Is it true that Rangababu's legs were broken?"

Asserting that Vamsi's actions will haunt him, Yarlagadda vowed to urge Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu to initiate a thorough probe into the alleged misdeeds and land scams of Vallabhaneni Vamsi.

Dadishetti Raja Appointed as YSRCP Kakinada Dist President



**TPN Correspondent
Kakinada, Feb 14**

There was widespread joy and excitement following the appointment of Dadishetti Raja as the Kakinada district president of the YSR Congress Party (YSRCP). Supporters gathered in large numbers at the party office in S. Annaram village to congratulate him. They felicitated him with shawls and presented bouquets, marking the occasion with enthusiasm.

Several YSRCP leaders, including Yanamala Krishnadu, Potula Lakshman, Nagam Dorababu, Lagudu Srinu, Nagam Ganga Babu, Kusanam Dorababu, Vangalapudi Kanaka Babu, and Mangalapudi Siva, met Raja and extended their best wishes. Keerthy Balakrishna and other key members were also present. Speaking to the media, for-

mer Rashtra Mala Corporation Chairperson Pedapeta Ammaji emphasized that the party would work diligently under Raja's leadership to further strengthen its base. She criticized the coalition government for failing to fulfill its promises and assured that YSRCP leaders would continue their efforts to secure electoral victories without compromising their stance on power.

Meanwhile, the party issued orders appointing:

Chintakayala Essar Vishwanath as Kotanandur Mandal Party President.

Dungala Nageswara Rao as Tuni Mandal Party President.

Bathula Veerabhadra Rao as Thondangi Mandal Party President.

With these appointments, YSRCP aims to bolster its presence and prepare for upcoming political challenges.

Ambati Rambabu Questions the Reason Behind Vallabhaneni Vamsi's Arrest

**TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 14**

YSRCP leader Ambati Rambabu has expressed shock over the arrest of party leader Vallabhaneni Vamsi, stating that he does not understand the reason behind it. Speaking to the media after visiting the DGP's office to submit a petition regarding the arrest, Ambati said that while Vamsi is an accused in one or two cases, including the attack on the Gannavaram TDP office, he had already secured anticipatory bail from the court. Given this legal protection, he argued that there was no valid reason for Vamsi's arrest. Ambati alleged that the arrest was part of

a conspiracy and was carried out illegally. He accused the ruling TDP leadership, including Chandrababu Naidu and Nara Lokesh, of targeting Vamsi after he left TDP to join YSRCP. He further claimed that a false case was fabricated to frame him.



Ambati also criticized the authorities for imposing restrictions when Vamsi's wife attempted to meet him. He expressed frustration over the fact that, despite securing an appointment to submit a petition to the DGP, the officer left the office before their arrival. He questioned why the petition was not accepted and demanded clarity on whether they should wait for an official response or schedule another meeting.

Ambati reiterated that the responsibility of maintaining law and order lies with the DGP and demanded a fair and transparent explanation regarding the arrest.

BIS Regional Training Programme for School Teachers on Quality Standards

**TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 14**

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Vijayawada, organized a one-day training programme on 'Learning Science via Standards' in Visakhapatnam. The event, held on February 13 at Hotel Green Park, aimed to educate 40 science teachers from standard clubs in schools across Vizianagaram, Srikakulam, and Manyam districts on incorporating Indian Standards into their teaching methods.

Shri B. Vijay Bhaskar, Regional Joint Director of School Education, Visakhapatnam, attended the event and emphasized the practical applications of scientific laws using everyday products. He stated that teachers and mentors from standard clubs would play a crucial role in spreading awareness about quality standards in society. Srikakulam District Education Officer S. Tirumala Chaitanya, another chief guest, highlighted the importance of quality and standards in education. He noted that the



curriculum would equip students with essential knowledge to handle real-life challenges confidently.

BIS-Vijayawada Scientist C & Deputy Director, Sri D. Vivek Vardhan Reddy, explained the BIS standardization and certification process, stating that this initiative would help students excel in science and contribute meaningfully to society.

Dr. Manchikanti Srinivas, Professor and Mentor from GVP College of Engineering Standards Club, spoke on BIS-developed cur-



ricula designed to enhance scientific knowledge among school children.

BIS officials D. Krishna Veer Verma and J. Anil Kumar provided participants with detailed insights into the BIS website, e-BIS, CARE app, and Manak Rath, an online platform for exchanging information on quality and standards. They conducted presentations on scientific laws, principles, and product quality standards, demonstrating how teachers could integrate them into their lessons.

Former Minister Alla Nani Joins TDP in the Presence of CM Naidu

**TPN Correspondent
Undavalli, Feb 14**

Former Minister Alla Nani formally joined the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in the presence of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu at Undavalli. He personally met the Chief Minister, marking his official entry into the party.

Chandrababu Naidu welcomed Alla Nani by covering his head, symbolizing his induction into TDP. The event witnessed the participation of several key leaders, including TDP State President Palla Srinivasa Rao, Eluru District President Ganni Veeranjanyulu, Minister Parthasarathy, Eluru MLA Badeti Chanti, and Sujay Krishna Ranga Rao.

Alla Nani's move to TDP is expected to strengthen the party's presence in West Godavari and Eluru regions. Party leaders expressed confidence that his experience and influence would contribute to TDP's political strategy ahead of the upcoming elections.



K.L. Agricultural College Students Visit Tulsi Seeds Factory

**TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 14**

As part of their scientific study tour, 170 third-year students from K.L. Agricultural College, a division of K.L. University, visited the Tulsi Seeds Factory on Thursday. The industrial visit aimed to provide students with hands-on exposure to seed processing, biotechnology, and hybrid seed production.

During the visit, students explored various sections of the facility, including the seed processing plant, delinting plant, packing unit, biotechnology lab, and greenhouse. Tulsi Seeds Production Manager and R&D scientist guided the students, offering detailed explanations on hybrid seed development, processing, and quality assur-

ance techniques.

Representing K.L. Agricultural College, Assistant Professors Smt. Sushma Raj Chellem, Sri G. Sai Vamsi Reddy, Smt. Kavuri Kalpana, and Associate Professor Dr. P. Senthil Murugan from the Genetics & Plant Breeding Department accompanied the students. They emphasized that the visit provided valuable insights into modern seed technology and industry practices, enhancing the students' academic learning.

On this occasion, the faculty members thanked Tulsi Seeds Chairman Shri Tulsi Ramachandra Prabhu and Managing Director Shri Tulsi Yogish Chandra for allowing the students to visit the facility and gain practical knowledge.



Eluru Range IG Reviews Law and Order at Gudivada DSP Office



**TPN Correspondent
Gudivada, Feb 14**

Eluru Range Inspector General (IG) GVG Ashok Kumar and Krishna District Superintendent of Police (SP) R. Gangadhar Rao IPS conducted a review meeting at the Gudivada DSP office on Thursday. The meeting focused on traffic management, crime control, and public safety in Krishna district.

Speaking at the press conference, IG GVG Ashok Kumar emphasized the importance of law and order, stating that the district remains largely peaceful, with special attention given to women's and children's safety through the deployment of Shakti teams.

The police department aims to install one lakh CCTV cameras across Krishna district by March 1. These cameras will be set up in schools, colleges, public places, temples, mosques, churches, malls, cinema halls,

and other key locations. IG Ashok Kumar stressed that CCTV cameras play a crucial role in crime prevention and cited the recent theft case at Avanigadda temple, which was solved due to CCTV footage.

Additionally, modern surveillance technology such as drones and CCTV cameras will be utilized during gambling raids and other security operations to monitor and take action effectively.

Expressing concern over the rise in cybercrimes, IG Ashok Kumar urged the public to be cautious. He noted that fraudsters are deceiving people by posing as police officers and demanding money. The police are actively working to raise awareness about online scams.

To assist victims of cyber fraud, a special national portal and toll-free number (1930) have been set up. If reported within three hours, authorities can prevent unauthorized money transfers.

The meeting was attended by Gudivada Town DSP Dheeraj Vinil, Circle Inspectors (CIs), Sub-Inspectors (SIs), and police personnel from across the division. The IG assured that the department will take all necessary steps to maintain public safety and law enforcement.

State Creativity and Culture Commission Chairperson Tejaswi Podapati meets CM Naidu

Request to Declare Konaseema Prabhala Theertha as a State Festival

**TPN Correspondent
Vijayawada, Feb 14**

Andhra Pradesh State Creativity and Culture Commission Chairperson Tejaswi Podapati met Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu at the Secretariat on Wednesday, urging him to officially recognize Konaseema Prabhala Theertha as a state festival.

Tejaswi Podapati emphasized that this 400-year-old festival, celebrated in the Konaseema region, attracts over 4 lakh devotees annually and is a significant reflection of Telugu traditions and local culture. She highlighted that Prime



Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the Ministry of Culture, Government of India have also

appreciated the festival's cultural importance. She informed the Chief Min-

ister that the proposal had already been submitted to Tourism Minister Kandula Durgesh, who expressed full support for the recognition of Konaseema Prabhala Theertha as a state festival.

Tejaswi Podapati stated that granting state festival status to Konaseema Prabhala Theertha would revive Telugu cultural heritage and bring greater recognition to the region's traditions. In response, Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu assured that the proposal would be considered positively, she added.

Karnataka Crowned Champions in IA&AD South Zone Cricket Tournament 2025

Karnataka Team clinches the championship with an all-round performance



**TPN Correspondent
Mangalagiri, Feb 14**

The IA&AD South Zone Cricket Tournament 2025, hosted by the Principal Accountant General (Audit) Office, Vijayawada, concluded with Karnataka Team emerging as champions. The tournament, held from February 10-13, 2025, at ACA International Cricket Stadium, Mangalagiri, featured

intense competition among teams from Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh-Telangana.

In a thrilling final, Karnataka defeated Kerala to secure the title. Arjun Hoysala starred for Karnataka, scoring 99 runs off 49 balls with 10 fours and 5 sixes, setting a tournament record for the highest individual score. Captain J. Suchith was

declared the Best Player, while Vedant Bharadwaj (Tamil Nadu) won Best Batsman. Ankit Mishra (Kerala) took 9 wickets, earning him the Best Bowler award.

Former MP Gokaraju Ganga- raju presented the championship trophy and awards to the players, appreciating their sporting spirit. He emphasized that winning and losing are part of the game and praised the teams for their commitment.

The final match, which began at 9:30 AM on Thursday, saw Karnataka score 190 runs in 20 overs. Sharath B.R. (31 off 12 balls) and Nikin John also contributed crucial runs. Kerala bowlers Ankit Mishra (3/30) and S. Midhun (2/35) managed

to contain Karnataka in the final overs.

Chasing 191, Kerala fell short at 162/10. Manukrishnan (42 off 23 balls), Shyamson (30 off 20 balls), and MD Shahbaz Hussein (26 off 19 balls) put up a fight, but Karnataka's bowlers Aditya (3/18), Nikin Bose (3/37), and Sai (2/21) sealed the win.

Principal Accountant General (Audit) Sharat Chaturvedi and SPA Director Dr. Ramesh Sri-konda commended the players and praised the successful organization of the first-ever South Zone tournament. The event was attended by Principal Accountant General (A&E) Shanthi Priya, Senior DAGs K. Bhaskar, Kishore Reddy, Rakesh Nayak, N. Nikhila, Lalit Kumar, and other officials.

NTR District Collector Emphasizes Strict Implementation of Election Code

**TPN Correspondent
NTR Dist, Feb 14**

With polling for the Pattabhadra constituency elections of the combined Krishna-Guntur districts scheduled for February 27, NTR District Collector Dr. G. Lakshmi Sha has directed officials to ensure the strict and impartial implementation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). In a meeting held on Thursday at the Collectorate's Sri Pingali Venkaiah Hall, officials from the Flying Squad Teams (FST), Static Surveillance Teams (SST), Video Surveillance Teams (VST), and Video View-

ing Teams (VVT) were briefed on their duties. The Collector emphasized that illegal movement of cash, liquor, and valuables must be prevented, with 11 check-post personnel, 24 flying squads, and 11 static surveillance teams working round the clock.

He instructed police, excise, IT, forest, banking, and other enforcement departments to function in close coordination. Special teams are required to submit daily reports to the district nodal officer in the prescribed format.

The district call center has been set up to

respond quickly to complaints, and static surveillance teams at check posts were told to remain alert. While enforcing rules strictly, officials must also ensure that the public does not face unnecessary inconvenience, the Collector added.

The meeting was attended by DRO and Assistant Returning Officer M. Lakshmi Narasimham, MCC Nodal Officer K. Srinivasa Rao, District Cooperation Officer S. Srinivasa Reddy, Collectorate Election Cell Superintendent Chandramouli, and other officials.

Tirupati Parliament General Secretary Veenati Satish Reddy Meets CM Naidu



TPN Correspondent Amaravati, Feb 14
Tirupati District Tirupati Parliament General Secretary Veenati Satish Reddy met Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu in Amaravati, seeking government support for the development of Sullurpet, a border constituency of Tirupati near Chennai. During the meeting, Satish Reddy highlighted the region's backwardness and its lack of essential infrastructure and employment opportunities. He urged the state government to focus on Sullurpet's development, emphasizing its strategic location near Chennai, which could facilitate industrial and economic growth. Satish Reddy requested the CM to address key issues, including road connectivity, ed-

ucation, healthcare, and employment generation, to uplift the region. He expressed confidence that under CM Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, Sullurpet could witness significant progress. Accompanying him were Naidupeta Town President Kandula Krishna Reddy and Party President Kamireddy Ashok Reddy, who also voiced concerns about the constituency's challenges. They urged the state government to implement necessary policies that would enhance the quality of life for the people of Sullurpet. CM Chandrababu Naidu assured that the government would look into the concerns raised and take necessary steps to accelerate the development of the region.

Farmers in Rajanagaram Demand Justice Over Unpaid Compensation

TPN Correspondent Rajanagaram, Feb 14
Farmers in Kotha Velugubanda village, Rajanagaram mandal, East Godavari district, are demanding justice over unpaid compensation for their lands, which were acquired for house plots during the previous government's tenure. Protesting alongside women, the farmers accused officials of deception, stating that 80 acres of land were taken under the promise of ₹80 lakh in compensation within 20 days. However, two years have passed, and they have neither received their payments nor the original documents of their lands. Many families are now in severe financial distress, with debts piling up. A farmer reportedly passed away due to the burden of unpaid loans, leaving his family in despair. Women in the village are also



distressed, as they cannot afford dowry for their daughters' weddings, leading to postponed marriages. The farmers made a heart-wrenching appeal to the authorities, stating that if this injustice continues, they will have no choice but to take extreme steps due to their inability to cope with financial pressure. They urged officials to at least return their original land documents, which would allow them to secure financial stability. The protest saw the participation of affected farmers, women, and other villagers, all seeking urgent intervention from the authorities.

Charishma Shines in State-Level Basketball Championship

TPN | C.N. Murthy P. Gannavaram, Feb 14
Charishma Sai Ruthvi of Nimmakaya showcased her outstanding talent at the Koppana Mohan Rao, Ramadevi Memorial Eighth Youth Boys and Girls State Basketball Championship held in Pithapuram from February 8 to 11. She represented the joint East Godavari Girls' Team, which emerged victorious in the tournament. A Class 9 student at the local Zilla Parishad High School, Charishma has previously competed in national-level competitions as part of the state team. Recognizing her impressive performance, the school's Headmaster K. Sairam praised her dedication and talent. On Thursday, the school staff and teachers, including V. Sa-



tyanarayana, B. Venkateswara Rao, S. Aruna Jyothi, and P.D. Kumpatla Adilakshmi, congratulated Charishma on her latest achievement, encouraging her to continue excelling in sports.

No Need to Panic: Bird Flu Confirmed in Poultry, No Human Infections



- Bird flu detected in a poultry farm in Badampudi, Unguturu mandal.
- No human infections reported; officials urge against false propaganda.
- Infected zone declared within 1 km, with a 10 km surveillance zone.

TPN Correspondent Eluru, Feb 14
District Collector K. Vetriselvi has urged

people to refrain from spreading false propaganda regarding bird flu and to rely only on official information. Speaking to

journalists at the Eluru Collectorate on Thursday, she confirmed that samples from a poultry farm in Badampudi, Unguturu mandal, tested positive for bird flu. She stated that no human infections have been recorded anywhere in the district or the country. The 1 km radius around the affected poultry farm has been declared an infected zone, while a 10 km radius is under surveillance. She advised poultry farm owners to report any unusual chicken deaths to the Animal Husbandry Department immediately. The Collector dismissed rumors of a human bird flu case in Eluru, emphasizing that spreading unverified information causes unnecessary panic. She urged the public to stay calm and follow official advisories. Animal Husbandry Department JD Dr. T. Govindaraju and DCHS Dr. Paul Satish participated in the meeting.

TDP Leaders Urge Support for MLC Candidate Perabathula Rajasekhar



TPN | K. Govinda Raju Ramachandrapuram, Feb 14
A meeting with private educational institution heads was held in Ramachandrapuram, Konaseema district, where TDP State General Secretary and MLC election observer Ganni Krishna and senior alliance leader Vasamsetty Satyam urged support for Graduates' MLC candidate Perabathula Rajasekhar of Both Godavari Districts. Speaking at the event, Ganni Krishna highlighted that the coalition government is committed to creating employment opportunities for the unemployed by attracting foreign investments. He stated that under CM Chandrababu Naidu's leadership, Andhra Pradesh is working towards Swarnandhra 2047, ensuring economic growth and job cre-

ation. He criticized the YSRCP regime for weakening the education sector, causing challenges for students and institutions. He emphasized that electing a candidate like Rajasekhar, who understands the concerns of graduates and the unemployed, is crucial for the state's future. Vasamsetty Satyam reiterated that graduates play a key role in shaping the state's future and urged them to vote in large numbers for Rajasekhar, a trusted leader in TDP with a strong understanding of public issues. The event was attended by Ramachandrapuram election observer Kakinada Rama Rao, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, private institution correspondents, staff, and coalition leaders.

Quality Education and Health for a Golden Future, Says Collector Shyam Prasad

TPN | Narasimhulu Parvathipuram Manyam, Feb 14
District Collector A. Shyam Prasad emphasized that quality education and better health security are essential for a golden future for students. On Thursday, he visited Vikramapuram Zilla Parishad High School and the Komarada Mandal village secretariat in Parvathipuram Manyam district, interacting with students and assessing their curriculum knowledge and English proficiency. He also reviewed students' Bhavita cards, which record comprehensive health details, and noted that over 75% of adolescent girls and pregnant women in the district suffer from anemia. To address

this, he stressed the need for monthly blood tests, nutrition support, and teacher involvement in improving hemoglobin levels. He directed Anganwadi workers to play a crucial role in the Anemia Action Committee. Encouraging students, the Collector advised them to study with dedication, focus, and a clear goal to achieve success. He also distributed Future Cards to students, motivating them to aim high in life. District Education Officer N. Tirupati Naidu, MPDO Mallikarjuna Rao, Mandal Education Officer Tirupati, Principal Venkata Naidu, Medical Officer Sirisha, along with teachers, Anganwadi and ANM workers, participated in the program.



Collector Inspects Sites for the Oncology Department at the New Cancer Hospital

TPN | Dhanalakshmi Kakinada, Feb 14

District Collector Shanmohan conducted an inspection of potential sites for the oncology department of the newly constructed cancer hospital in Kakinada on Thursday. He examined the Municipal Guest House site, located next to the District Collector's office, as a possible location for the facility. Accompanying him were GGH Superintendent Dr. Lavanya Kumari and engineering officials from APMSIDC. Later, the Collector also reviewed the ongoing construction of a 500-bed integrat-

ed Ayurveda hospital at Kakinada Girls Polytechnic College (GPT). Accompanied by AYUSH medical officers, APMSIDC engineers, and GPT staff, he assessed the final-stage construction work, site allo-



cation for an approach road, and space planning for the cancer hospital using site maps. During the inspection, Collector Shanmohan sought detailed reports from officials regarding the project's progress and necessary arrangements for its completion. Key officials present at the inspection included Kakinada Urban Tahsildar Jitendra, APMSIDC EE CH Ratna Raju, DE NS Chakravarthy, AYUSH medical officers Dr. Mohammed Shajan Ali, K. Srinivasu, and GPT in-charge Dr. Sanjay, along with other government representatives.

Grand Celebrations for Dr. Koteswara Babu's Birthday in Srikalahasti

TPN | C. Sekhar Srikalahasti, Feb 14

The birthday of renowned social worker, journalist, and Andhra Sri Awardee Dr. Yallampati Koteswara Babu was celebrated in a grand manner, transforming into a festival of service and community engagement. Known for his relentless efforts in social service and journalism, his well-wishers organized large-scale charitable programs throughout the town. Despite his busy schedule in Delhi, Srikalahasti MLA Bojjala Venkata Sudheer Reddy extended his heartfelt wishes to Koteswara Babu over the phone, appreciating his contributions to society. BJP State Secretary Kola Anand also commended Babu for his dedication to ethical journalism and social service.

The birthday celebrations were organized at multiple locations in Srikalahasti:

- Srikalahasti Press Club honored Koteswara Babu with a shawl and garland.
 - Annadanam programs were conducted at various locations, benefiting over 500 people.
 - Milk, fruits, and bread were distributed to hospital patients and attendants.
 - Sarees were given to underprivileged women in Eswaraiyah Colony.
 - Educational materials, including books, pens, and pencils, were distributed to 70 students at Allimadugu Government School in Tufan Center.
- TDP leader Lakkamaneni Madhubabu organized a grand celebration at his office near Battaiah Naidu Hospital, where

a massive cake-cutting ceremony took place. Srikalahasti MLA's wife, Bojjala Rishita Reddy, personally attended, blessing and congratulating Koteswara Babu. Other prominent leaders, including former Srikalahasti Market Committee Chairman Rangineni Chenchayya Naidu, Joint Chittoor District Jana Sena General Secretary Kotte Sai, TDP Minority State Leader Shakir Ali, TDP Tribal Leader Subbaiah, and BJP leaders, participated in the event.



Who Is Tulsi Gabbard?

From Democrat to Trump's Director of National Intelligence



TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C.

Tulsi Gabbard, a former Democrat and Iraq War veteran, has been confirmed as the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) under US President Donald Trump. Her appointment, approved by a 52-48 Senate vote, has sparked widespread debate due to her past political affiliations, controversial foreign policy stances, and lack of intelligence experience.

From Democrat to Trump Loyalist

Gabbard, 43, initially gained national recognition as a four-term Congresswoman from Hawaii and a 2020 Democratic presidential candidate. Once considered a rising star in the Democratic Party, she broke ties with the party in October 2022, criticizing it as "elitist" and detached from the concerns of ordinary Americans. She soon became an independent and later aligned herself with Trump, endorsing his re-election bid in August 2024.

Her role in Trump's campaign intensified when she was named a co-chair of his transition team. In October 2024, Gabbard officially joined the Republican Party, citing Trump's leadership as a transformative force that restored the GOP's focus on "the people and peace." This dramatic political shift set the stage for her subsequent rise in the Trump administration.

A Military Background and Foreign Policy Controversies

Gabbard's credentials include her service in the Hawaii Army National Guard, where she completed three deployments in Africa and the Middle East. Her military experience, coupled with her time in Congress, shaped her foreign policy positions, which have often drawn scrutiny.

She has been criticized for her views on key national security issues. In 2017, she traveled to Syria and met with then-President Bashar al-Assad, who was accused of war crimes, including the use of chemical weapons against civilians. While Gabbard defended the visit by saying she "asked tough questions," critics accused her of legitimizing Assad's rule.

Gabbard has also expressed skepticism toward US intelligence assessments, a stance that has raised concerns about her new role as DNI. She has previously echoed Russian narratives about the Ukraine war, leading to allegations that her positions align with Kremlin propaganda. Her opposition to Section 702, a crucial US surveillance program that monitors suspected terrorists overseas, has further fueled doubts about her approach to national security.

Edward Snowden and Surveillance Policy

Another contentious issue in Gabbard's record is her past support for Edward Snowden, the former Na-

tional Security Agency (NSA) contractor who leaked classified information about US surveillance programs and sought refuge in Russia. Gabbard acknowledged that Snowden's disclosures revealed important information about government overreach but maintained that his actions were illegal. Her stance on surveillance aligns with her broader skepticism of US intelligence operations, making her appointment to oversee the intelligence community a contentious decision. Critics argue that her past positions could influence her approach to classified information and surveillance policies, potentially weakening intelligence-gathering capabilities.

Meeting PM Modi on Confirmation Day

On the very day of her confirmation, Gabbard met with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington, D.C. Modi became the first foreign leader to meet the newly appointed US intelligence chief, underscoring India's importance in Washington's strategic calculations.

According to sources, the meeting also touched upon the growing presence of Khalistani elements in the United States, which had expanded significantly under the previous Biden administration. India has repeatedly raised concerns about extremist activities linked to Khalistani groups, particularly those targeting Indian diplomatic missions. With Trump back in office, there are expectations that his administration, with Gabbard as DNI, may take stricter measures against these groups.

Gabbard, who has previously expressed admiration for Modi and India's governance model, is expected to play a crucial role in shaping intelligence cooperation between the two nations.

Challenges Ahead as Director of National Intelligence

As DNI, Gabbard will be responsible for coordinating intelligence efforts across 18 agencies, including the CIA, NSA, and FBI. Her lack of prior experience in intelligence operations has led to concerns about her ability to navigate complex security threats, especially at a time when the US faces increasing challenges from global adversaries.

While Trump and his allies view Gabbard as a principled leader who challenges establishment politics, her confirmation has deepened partisan divisions in Washington. Democrats see her appointment as a political move rather than a strategic decision for national security, while some Republicans remain skeptical about her past affiliations.

As she takes charge of US intelligence, all eyes will be on how Gabbard balances her unconventional views with the responsibilities of safeguarding national security.

1914, A War Story: How Indian Soldiers Left Their Mark On World War I

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron paid tributes to Indian soldiers who fought in World Wars I and II during their visit to the Mazargues War Cemetery in Marseille. Their tribute highlighted the immense sacrifices made by Indian troops, particularly in the trenches of France during World War I.

"At Mazargues War Cemetery, President @EmmanuelMacron and I paid homage to the soldiers who fought in the World Wars. This includes several Indian soldiers who valiantly fought and displayed utmost grit. All the brave soldiers answered the call of duty and fought with unwavering courage," PM Modi posted on X.

President Macron, in his tribute, acknowledged India's contributions, particularly in 1914 when over 100,000 Indian soldiers fought for France. "Ten thousand never returned. They set foot on the soil of Marseille before fighting in the mud of the trenches, unaware that they were marching to their deaths. Their sacrifice binds France and India forever," he wrote.

India's Role in World War I

During World War I, India, then under British rule, supported the war effort in hopes of gaining greater political autonomy. The British Expeditionary Force, facing severe losses, called for reinforcements, leading to the deployment of Indian divisions. On August 6, 1914, the Lahore Division (3rd Indian War Division) and the Meerut Division (7th Indian War Division) were mobilized. Initially meant to defend the Suez Canal in Egypt, the Lahore Division was redirected to France due to the worsening war situation.

Indian soldiers arrived in Marseille on September 26, 1914, and were deployed in the trenches by October 24. They played a crucial role in several key battles, including Neuve-Chapelle, Givenchy-les-la-Bassée, Festubert, Aubers Ridge, and Loos.

Harsh Conditions in the Trenches

Accustomed to fighting in dry, hilly regions and wearing summer cotton uniforms, Indian troops struggled with the freezing, muddy trenches of France. Many suffered from pneumonia and trench foot, a painful condition caused by prolonged exposure to wet conditions. A French journal, *Le Bochofage*, wrote in 1916: "Hell is not fire. Hell is mud." Despite the brutal conditions, Indian soldiers demonstrated exceptional bravery. The 129th Baluchis and the 57th Wilde's Rifles from the Lahore Division were later sent as reinforcements for the Alleby's Cavalry Corps at Ypres in Belgium.

During the First Battle of Ypres (October-November 1914), Sepoy Khudadad Khan of the 129th Baluchis manned a machine gun until his position was overrun by German forces. He became the first Indian to be awarded the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest gallantry honor.

In November 1914, Naik Darwan Singh of the 39th Garhwal Rifles led an assault to recapture German-occupied trenches. Despite severe injuries, he continued leading until the trenches were cleared. He was the second Indian soldier to receive the Victoria Cross.

Letters from the Frontlines

Many letters from Indian soldiers revealed the harsh realities of war. A soldier from Ludhiana wrote: "Don't be grieved at my death because I shall die with arms in hand, wearing the warrior's clothes. This is the happiest death that anyone can die." Another soldier, writing in Garhwali, described the horrors of battle: "It is very hard to endure the bombs, father. It will be difficult for anyone to survive and come back safe and sound. The bullets and cannonballs come down like snow. The mud is up to a man's middle."

A Lasting Legacy

The sacrifices of Indian soldiers in World War I played a significant role in shaping India's fight for independence. Their bravery in foreign lands is now being acknowledged globally, as seen in the tributes paid by Modi and Macron. The recognition serves as a reminder of their extraordinary contribution to world history, ensuring that their heroism is never forgotten.



India Slips to 96th Rank in Global Corruption Index 2024

India has slipped three positions in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2024, ranking 96th among 180 countries. Compiled by Transparency International, the index measures perceived levels of public sector corruption worldwide on a scale from 0 to 100, where "0" signifies high corruption and "100" indicates a very clean system. India's score declined from 39 in 2023 to 38 in 2024, continuing a downward trend from 40 in 2022.

India and Its Neighbours

Among India's neighboring countries, Pakistan ranked 135th, Sri Lanka stood at 121st, and Bangladesh dropped further down to 149th place. China, meanwhile, secured a relatively better position at 76th. The re-

port highlights that these countries continue to struggle with deep-rooted corruption, which affects governance, economic growth, and public trust in institutions.

Denmark Leads, South Sudan at the Bottom

Denmark retained its position as the least corrupt country in the world, followed by Finland, Singapore, and New Zealand. At the opposite end of the index, South Sudan ranked as the most corrupt nation, scoring just 8 points. It displaced Somalia, which also recorded a low score of 9. Other countries with poor rankings included Venezuela (10) and Syria (12).

Major Global Declines

Many influential countries recorded their worst rankings in over a decade. The United States dropped from 24th place to 28th, with its score declining from 69 to 65. France slipped four points to 67, landing at the 25th spot, while Germany saw a three-point drop to 75, tying with Canada at 15th place. Mexico, grappling with a lack of judicial action in corruption cases, fell five points to 26. Russia, already plagued by governance concerns, dropped another four points to 22, reinforcing Transparency International's observation that Moscow's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has "further entrenched authoritarianism."

Impact of Corruption on

Climate Change

The report also warned of the dangers corruption poses to global climate efforts. A lack of transparency and accountability in climate financing increases the risk of embezzlement and misuse of funds. "Undue influence," often from the private sector, obstructs policies aimed at reducing emissions and combating climate change. The misuse of climate funds has direct consequences on the world's ability to adapt to global warming, as resources meant for vulnerable populations are diverted.

Call for Global Action

Transparency International emphasized that corruption remains a serious threat to democracy, stability,

and human rights. "The international community and every country must make tackling corruption a top and long-term priority. This is crucial to pushing back against authoritarianism and securing a peaceful, free, and sustainable world," the report stated.

While 32 countries have significantly improved their corruption standings since 2012, 148 countries have either stagnated or worsened. The findings reinforce the urgent need for stronger anti-corruption measures worldwide. India's drop in the rankings underscores the necessity for more robust institutional reforms and stricter enforcement of anti-corruption laws to restore public trust and improve governance.

PM Modi Meets US Intelligence Chief Tulsi Gabbard in Washington

TPN Correspondent | Washington
Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the newly appointed US Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, in Washington, focusing on strengthening intelligence cooperation between India and the United States. During the meeting, Modi congratulated Gabbard on her confirmation as the nation's top intelligence official and acknowledged her longstanding support for India-US relations. Discussions revolved around enhancing intelligence-sharing in counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, and emerging threats. "Met USA's Director of National Intelligence, @TulsiGabbard in Washington DC. Congratulated her on her confirmation. Discussed various aspects of the India-USA friendship, of which she's always been a strong votary,"

Modi posted on X. The Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal, also confirmed the discussions in a post on X, highlighting the focus on security collaboration. Modi arrived in Washington on Wednesday evening after co-chairing the Artificial Intelligence Action Summit in France with French President Emmanuel Macron. He is set to meet former US President Donald Trump at the White House on Thursday for bilateral discussions. Gabbard, 43, was sworn in as Director of National Intelligence in the Oval Office on Wednesday, just hours after the Senate confirmed her appointment with a narrow 52-48 vote. Attorney General Pam Bondi administered the oath of office. Trump, praising Gabbard's appoint-

ment, described her as "an American of extraordinary courage and patriotism," noting her three deployments in the Army National Guard and her tenure as a Democratic Congresswoman. In her remarks after being sworn in, Gabbard acknowledged the challenges facing the intelligence community and emphasized the need for restoring public trust. "Unfortunately, the American people have very little trust in the intelligence community, largely because they've seen the weaponisation and politicisation of an entity that is supposed to be purely focused on ensuring our national security," she stated. Gabbard's confirmation followed two months of deliberations over her qualifications to lead US intelligence agencies and oversee the President's daily intelligence briefings.



Sachin Pilot's Subtle Dig at Ashok Gehlot Over Rajasthan Phone Tapping Row



TPN Correspondent | Rajasthan
Congress leader Sachin Pilot has demanded a white paper from the Rajasthan government after state minister Kirori Lal Meena alleged that his phone was tapped. Pilot called for immediate action, stating that such serious allegations should not be ignored. "A responsible minister from the gov-

ernment is saying his phone was tapped. The government needs to take action," Pilot said, expressing surprise that instead of investigating the claim, the BJP government had issued a showcause notice to Meena. Pilot's remarks also appeared to be a veiled attack on former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, as the Congress government under Gehlot had been accused of tapping the phones of MLAs loyal to Pilot during the 2020 political crisis. "Phone tapping is a serious offence, now or earlier, it should be investigated," he asserted. The issue of phone tapping has once again rocked the Rajasthan Assembly, with Congress using it to target the BJP

government. Earlier, BJP leader and Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat had filed a case alleging that the Gehlot government tapped phone calls. Lokesh Sharma, a former Officer on Special Duty to Gehlot, reportedly admitted in court that the Congress leader had provided recordings of rebel MLAs to be leaked to the media. The case is currently being heard in Delhi's Patiala House court. Pilot also raised concerns over the farmers' agitation in Gharsana, Anupgarh district, where farmers are demanding more water from the canal system. He urged the state government to intervene, warning that similar protests in the past had turned volatile.

Private sector must lead defence manufacturing: Rajnath Singh

TPN Correspondent | Bengaluru
Defence Minister Rajnath Singh emphasized the critical role of the private sector in India's defence manufacturing, stating that the country is undergoing a revolutionary transformation. Speaking at the indigenisation event and valedictory ceremony of Aero India 2025, he highlighted how India's fighter jets, missile systems, and naval vessels are not just protecting borders but also gaining global attention. Singh underscored the shift from India's historical dependence on defence imports to self-reliance, noting that nearly 70% of defence equipment is now being manufactured domestically. He credited this progress to the trust and commitment of stakeholders, leading to increased defence exports, including systems like BrahMos and Akash missiles.

The Defence Minister pointed out that India's defence industrial complex now includes 16 Defence Public Sector Undertakings, 430 licensed companies,



and approximately 16,000 MSMEs. He stressed the need for a strong private sector contribution, which currently stands at 21% of total defence production. The government, he said, is

committed to removing uncertainties and ensuring a level playing field for private companies in defence manufacturing. Praising the Indian armed forces for their confidence in indigenous defence products, Singh said their acceptance is crucial for achieving complete self-reliance. He also expressed confidence that India is evolving from a participant to a global leader in defence innovation and aerospace technology. Aero India 2025 saw record participation, with over 500 delegates from 84 countries, including 931 exhibitors—782 from India—alongside 58 Original Equipment Manufacturers and 115 global CEOs. With the three business days concluding on February 12, the final two days of the event will be open to the public for the air show.

Assam Rifles Crack Down on Meitei Militants in Manipur



TPN Correspondent | Imphal
In a major operation against insurgency, Assam Rifles and the Indian Army apprehended two cadres of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (Progressive) [PREPAK (PRO)] and four active members of the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (People's War Group) [KCP (PWG)] in separate operations across Manipur. Acting on intelligence inputs, Assam Rifles and Manipur Police conducted a raid in Imphal East's Dingku Road area, detaining two PREPAK (PRO) cadres. In another operation in Kameng Sabal

village, Imphal West, the Indian Army and police arrested four KCP (PWG) militants and seized five pistols, ammunition, and war-like stores. Meanwhile, a joint operation by Assam Rifles, CRPF, and Manipur Police targeted illicit poppy cultivation in Sehjang village, Kangpokpi district. Around six acres of poppy fields, capable of yielding 30 kg of opium, were destroyed. Nearby huts and makeshift shelters used for processing the drugs were also burned down. Authorities remain committed to maintaining peace and curbing illegal activities. An earlier operation on February 10 saw the arrest of eight militants and the recovery of 25 weapons across multiple districts, including Kaching, Thoubal, Tengnoupal, and Bishnupur. All seized weapons have been handed over to the Manipur Police.

Harshwardhan Sapkal Appointed as Maharashtra Congress Chief

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai
Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Harshwardhan Sapkal as the new Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) chief, replacing Nana Patole. The decision was announced on Thursday, along with the appointment of Vijay Namdevrao Wadetiwar as the leader of the Congress Legislative Party in Maharashtra. Sapkal, who represented the Buldhana Assembly Constituency from 2014 to 2019, takes charge at a crucial time for the party in



the state. The All India Congress Committee (AICC) acknowledged the contributions of outgoing president Nana Patole in an official statement. Patole resigned following the Congress' poor performance in the Maharashtra Assembly elections, where the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance suffered a significant defeat against the ruling Mahayuti alliance of the NDA.

Meitei body accuses Kuki groups of sustaining unrest in Manipur



- COCOMI alleges Kuki groups fueling unrest
- Calls for action against those justifying instability
- Kuki groups continue demand for separate administration

TPN Correspondent | Imphal
The Coordination Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), an umbrella body of Meitei civil society groups, has accused Kuki organisations of deliberately sustaining unrest in Manipur to push their demand for a separate administration. COCOMI alleged that even after Chief Minister N Biren Singh stepped down, Kuki groups have found new reasons to continue their agitation. COCOMI claimed that Kuki organisations are "making their own people suffer while capitalising on

their discontent for political gains." The statement comes amid speculation of President's Rule in the violence-hit state following the Chief Minister's resignation on Sunday, a day before the Congress was set to introduce a no-confidence motion in the Assembly. The Indigenous Tribal Leaders' Forum (ITLF) and the Committee on Tribal Unity (CoTU), along with 10 Kuki-Zo MLAs and militant groups under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement, remain firm on their demand for a separate administration. Kuki leaders argue that the ethnic violence since May 2023 has intensified their call for a Union Territory or autonomous region. The World Kuki-Zo Intellectual Council (WKZIC) recently submitted a memorandum to the Manipur Governor, highlighting that Kuki tribes have been seeking statehood since 1946-47. The document cited petitions to India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, and reiterated their demand for constitutional recognition under Article 3. With over 250 people killed and 50,000 displaced since the conflict erupted nearly two years ago, tensions remain high in the state. COCOMI has urged the central government to take strict measures against any group using violence and unrest for political leverage.

Maharashtra Minister Dhananjay Munde Summoned Over Poll Affidavit

TPN Correspondent | Mumbai
A court in Maharashtra's Beed has issued a summons to state minister Dhananjay Munde following a complaint by his first wife, alleging that he failed to disclose information in his election affidavit. The Joint Civil Judge Junior Division and Judicial Magistrate First Class (CJJD and JMFC) at Parli issued the summons on February 10, with the next hearing scheduled for February 24. The complaint, filed by Karuna Munde, claims that while Munde mentioned his wife Rajshri Munde and their children in his affidavit, he did not declare any assets owned by Karuna Munde. The case

was filed under sections 33(A)(i) and 125A of the Representation of the People Act, which mandates full disclosure of information in election affidavits, with violations carrying a potential six-month jail term. Dhananjay Munde is also under scrutiny over the arrest of his aide Walmik Karad in an extortion case linked to the murder of a sarpanch in Beed district. Additionally, a Mumbai court recently ordered him to pay Rs 2 lakh per month in interim maintenance to Karuna Munde and their daughter after finding "prima facie" evidence of domestic violence.



“Peace” On Agenda, Trump’s Phone Calls with Putin, Zelensky



TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C.

US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin held a phone call on Wednesday, agreeing to initiate immediate negotiations to end the Ukraine war. Trump described the conversation as “lengthy and highly productive,” adding that both leaders also agreed to visit each other’s countries in a move signaling a major diplomatic shift. The Kremlin confirmed the call lasted nearly ninety minutes, with Putin and Trump agreeing that “the time has come to work together.” Trump stated on Truth Social that the discussions covered Ukraine, the Middle East, and artificial intelligence. He emphasized that both leaders were committed to stopping the “millions of deaths” resulting from the war, though he did not provide verification for the casualty figures. Following the call, Trump announced that he would immediately

contact Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to inform him about the conversation. Zelensky later confirmed the discussion, stating that he and Trump explored “opportunities to achieve peace.” Trump suggested that, like Putin, Zelensky was also interested in ending the conflict.

The timing of this diplomatic breakthrough comes amid other signs of easing tensions between Washington and Moscow. A prisoner exchange earlier in the week saw Russia release detained US teacher Marc Fogel, while the US freed Russian cryptocurrency figure Alexander Vinnik. Additionally, the Trump administration secured the release of an American citizen detained in Belarus, a key Russian ally.

Trump’s remarks on Putin were notably positive, with the US leader highlighting that Putin even referenced his campaign motto, “COMMON SENSE.” The Kremlin, while

more restrained in its statement, confirmed that Putin agreed a long-term settlement could only be reached through negotiations.

The developments come as Ukraine remains under continued Russian attacks, with fresh missile and drone strikes targeting Kyiv. Meanwhile, Zelensky is set to meet US Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the Munich Security Conference, where he hopes to finalize an economic agreement with Washington.

Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth recently stated that efforts to restore Ukraine’s pre-2014 borders were “an illusionary goal” and described NATO membership for Ukraine as “not realistic.” The European response to Trump’s engagement with Putin has been cautious, with foreign ministers from France, Germany, and Spain asserting that a lasting peace must include Ukraine and its European allies.

PM Modi Gifts Eco-Friendly Alphabet Set to US VP JD Vance’s Kids

TPN Correspondent | Washington

During his visit to France for the AI Action Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented a unique eco-friendly wooden alphabet set to Mirabel Rose Vance, daughter of US Vice President JD Vance. The sustainable wooden alphabet set is designed as a safe and engaging learning tool, aiding in motor skills and cognitive development. Unlike plastic alternatives, it is free from harmful chemicals and promotes environmental conservation. In addition, PM Modi gifted Dokra artwork—musicians with studded stonework—to French President Emmanuel Macron, showcasing India’s rich artistic heritage.

PM Modi visited France from February 10-12, participating in discussions on Artificial Intelligence (AI), commerce, energy, and cultural ties. He co-chaired the AI Action Summit alongside French President Macron, where global leaders and tech CEOs gathered to discuss advancements in AI.

Following his France visit, PM Modi arrived in the United States on Wednesday

evening (local time) at the invitation of US President Donald Trump. He was received at the Joint Base Andrews in Washington DC by India’s Ambassador to the US, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, along with other senior officials.

This marks PM Modi’s first visit to the US since Donald Trump assumed office for his second term. Upon arrival, he proceeded to Blair House, where members of the Indian diaspora gathered to welcome him with chants of “Bharat Mata Ki Jai” and “Modi Modi.” Expressing gratitude, PM Modi thanked the community for their warm reception.

As a symbolic gesture, the US flag at Blair House was replaced with the Indian flag ahead of his arrival. PM Modi will stay at Blair House during his US visit from February 12-13.

Since November 2024, PM Modi and Trump have spoken twice over the phone. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar attended Trump’s inauguration and later met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, also participating in the QUAD Foreign Ministers’ meeting in January 2025.



Ukraine should Abandon its Plans to Reclaim Lost Territory

TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C.

In a major shift in U.S. policy, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has stated that Ukraine should reconsider its ambitions of reclaiming Russian-occupied territories and instead pursue a negotiated peace backed by international forces. He also declared that Ukraine’s NATO membership is an unrealistic goal in future diplomatic agreements.

Hegseth made these remarks during a NATO meeting focused on securing additional military aid for Ukraine, signaling a stark departure from previous U.S. policy. His comments closely align with Russian demands that Ukraine withdraw from annexed regions and abandon its bid to join NATO.

Trump and Putin Agree to Begin Peace Talks

Shortly after Hegseth’s statement, former U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Truth Social that he had spoken with Russian President Vladimir Putin and that both had agreed to initiate peace negotiations.

“We talked about the strengths of our respective nations and the great benefit of working together. But first, as we both agreed, we want to stop the millions of deaths taking place in the war,” Trump stated.

He added that U.S. and Russian teams would begin negotiations immediately, and he would soon contact Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy regarding the developments.



No U.S. Troops in Future Security Agreement

Hegseth made it clear that any security guarantees for Ukraine should be implemented by European and international forces—not the U.S. military.

“To be clear, as part of any security guarantee, there will not be U.S. troops deployed to Ukraine,” he emphasized. He also ruled out NATO’s involvement in a future peacekeeping mission, arguing that such an engagement could trigger Article 5 obligations, which would require allied nations to defend those forces in case of conflict.

The defense secretary urged European nations to take on the majority of Ukraine’s military and fi-

nancial support, signaling a shift in Washington’s approach to burden-sharing.

“Europe must provide the overwhelming share of future lethal and non-lethal aid to Ukraine,” Hegseth asserted. Currently, both the U.S. and Europe contribute about 30% each to Ukraine’s defense, while the remaining portion comes from Ukraine’s own production.

Zelenskyy’s Response and Implications for Munich Conference

Following Trump’s disclosure of his talks with Putin, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed that he had also spoken with Trump about the war and prospects for peace.

“I had a meaningful conversation with President Trump about opportunities to achieve peace,” Zelenskyy wrote on X. “Together with the U.S., we are charting our next steps to stop Russian aggression and ensure a lasting, reliable peace. As President Trump said, ‘Let’s get it done.’”

The shifting stance of the U.S. is expected to create tensions at the upcoming Munich Security Conference, where U.S. Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio are set to meet with Zelenskyy and other officials.

“Gaza Belongs To Palestinians”, Says China, Opposes “Forced Displacement”



TPN Correspondent | Beijing

China has reiterated its opposition to the forced displacement of Palestinians, emphasizing that Gaza is an integral part of Palestinian territory. The statement came in

response to US President Donald Trump’s reported plan to relocate Gaza’s inhabitants elsewhere.

“Gaza belongs to the Palestinians and is an integral part of the Palestinian territory... We oppose the forced displacement of the people of Gaza,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said during a press briefing on Wednesday.

China has consistently called for a two-state solution and a peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. The latest remarks reaffirm Beijing’s stance against

any measures that alter the demographics of Gaza or displace its residents.

Trump’s proposal, which has drawn criticism from several international bodies, comes amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, with concerns growing over the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. China’s response aligns with its broader support for Palestinian statehood and opposition to unilateral actions affecting the region’s stability.

Elon Musk’s DOGE Team Raises Major Cyber Security Concerns

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

An internal report has raised alarm over the security risks posed by Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) team, warning that their access to critical systems represents “the single greatest insider threat risk” the Bureau of Fiscal Services has ever faced. The DOGE initiative, launched as a cost-cutting measure, began at the Treasury Department, where its engineers took control of the federal payment system under the pretext of monitoring public spending. It has since expanded across multiple agencies, disrupting and, in some cases, shutting down operations at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Department of Education,

and the General Services Administration (GSA).

Security experts are deeply concerned that a group of largely unvetted, young engineers—many affiliated with Musk’s companies—now hold control over critical government infrastructure. Senior officials with decades of experience have reportedly been sidelined, with some even locked out of buildings. At the Office of Personnel Management, DOGE-associated individuals allegedly linked an unauthorized server to the network and deployed AI software on citizens’ personal data, potentially breaching federal privacy laws.

The Treasury’s Bureau of Fiscal Services, which manages all federal payments, is a particularly vulnerable chokepoint.

Security experts Bruce Schneier and Davi Ottenheimer noted that Treasury systems were designed with nuclear-level security protocols, preventing any single person from having unlimited power. However, DOGE’s intervention has bypassed these safeguards.

Concerns over Musk’s personal conflicts of interest have also surfaced, given that his companies hold significant government contracts. Critics fear his access to sensitive data could provide an unfair advantage to his business empire. Meanwhile, cybersecurity experts warn that adversaries like China and Russia could exploit vulnerabilities created by the DOGE team’s rapid and unregulated overhaul.



Stock Markets See Volatile Session, End in Losses After Early Gains



Domestic stock markets witnessed high volatility on Thursday, swinging from strong gains in the morning to minor losses by the close. Benchmark indices surged initially, supported by mixed global cues and buying in heavyweight stocks at attractive prices. However, persistent uncertainty led to profit booking, dragging the indices down. Banking, auto, finance, IT, and FMCG stocks contributed to the decline, while the weekly derivatives expiry also added pressure.

The BSE Sensex, which had closed at 76,171 in the previous session, opened slightly higher at 76,201 and climbed to an intraday high of 76,763. However, it later dropped to 76,013 before ending the day at 76,138, down 32 points. The NSE Nifty opened at 23,055, hit a high of 23,235, and slipped to 22,992 before closing at 23,031, losing 13 points. The Nifty Bank declined 119 points, settling at 49,359.

In the Nifty50 pack, 23 stocks advanced, while 27 declined. The top gainers included Tata Steel, Sun Pharma, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, and Cipla, while Adani Enterprises, Adani Ports, Hero MotoCorp, Infosys, and L&T recorded the highest losses. Sector-wise, banking, auto, FMCG, IT, PSU banks, consumer durables, and oil & gas sectors saw gains,



MURTHY NAIDU PAADAM
Stock Market Analyst
+91 988 555 9709

while finance, media, metal, pharma, realty, and healthcare indices ended in the red. Market participation remained balanced, with 1,353 stocks gaining and 1,472 declining out of 2,893 stocks traded on the NSE. 12 stocks hit a 52-week high, while 193 stocks touched a 52-week low.

In corporate news, Manappuram Finance posted a 5.8% rise in Q3 net profit to ₹453 crore from ₹428 crore. Lumax Auto's profit surged 23% to ₹44.8 crore from ₹36.4 crore, while Ipca Labs saw a 7% rise in shares following a 38% jump in net profit to ₹248 crore. Meanwhile, PN Gadgil's net profit soared 49%, hitting the 10% upper circuit.

On the currency front, the rupee remained flat at 86.89 against the US dollar. In regulatory developments, SEBI has gained social media access to remove unauthorized financial advisors. CLSA gave an outperform rating to Kotak Mahindra Bank with a target price of ₹2,125, while Bernstein assigned a similar rating to Muthoot Finance, setting a target price of ₹2,500.

Additionally, Redington, SBI Cards, Kotak Mahindra, and Shree Cements hit fresh 52-week highs during the session.

Nirmala Sitharaman Introduces New Income Tax Bill

FM Nirmala Sitharaman introduces the Income Tax Bill 2025 in Lok Sabha.

Bill simplifies tax laws, cutting sections from 819 to 536.

Opposition MPs walk out in protest.

Sitharaman defends the bill, citing removal of outdated provisions.

Sent to a Select House Committee; report due next session.



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the Income Tax Bill 2025 in the Lok Sabha on Thursday, aiming to simplify the tax structure and make compliance easier for taxpayers. However, the introduction of the bill triggered protests from Opposition MPs, leading to a walkout from the session. As soon as Sitharaman introduced the bill amid a ruckus, several Opposition MPs were seen leaving the House. While the exact number of MPs who staged the walkout remains unclear, their objections centered around the bill's structure and the changes it proposes.

Opposition Raises Objections

MP NK Premachandran from Kerala's Kollam raised concerns about the bill containing more sections than the previous Income Tax Act of 1961. Responding to this, Sitharaman clarified that the original 1961 Act had only 298 sections, but over the years, amendments had expanded it to 819 sections. She emphasized that

the new bill reduces this number to 536, making the law more concise and efficient. She further pointed out that nearly 4,000 amendments had been made to the existing Act since its enforcement, and the new bill addresses these issues comprehensively. TMC MP Sougata Ray also criticized the bill, calling the changes "mechanical." However, Sitharaman dismissed this claim, arguing that significant changes had been made. She added that the number of words in the law had been halved, and both English and Hindi versions were now written in simpler language for better understanding.

Bill Sent to Select House Committee

Sitharaman suggested that the new Income Tax Bill 2025 be referred to a Select House Committee for detailed scrutiny. The terms of reference for the committee will be decided by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The committee is expected to submit its report on the first day of the next parliamentary session.

ED Freezes ₹170 Crore in Fake Forex Trading Scam; Raids Across Multiple States

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has frozen bank deposits worth ₹170 crore in a money laundering probe against QFX Trade, a fraudulent forex trading and deposit scheme. Multi-state raids were conducted on February 11 in Delhi, Noida, Shamli, and Rohtak, targeting the company's directors and its alleged mastermind, Lavish Chaudhary alias Nawab Ali.

Fraudulent Forex Scheme Busted

According to an ED statement, QFX Trade and its directors—Rajendra Sood, Santosh Kumar, and Vineet Kumar—were running an unregulated deposit scheme, duping investors with promises of high returns. The agency launched the probe after multiple FIRs were registered by the Himachal

Pradesh Police. As part of the investigation, ED officials raided various locations and found unexplained funds in 30 bank accounts linked to QFX, leading to the freezing of ₹170 crore. Additionally, ₹90 lakh in cash was seized from an agent of the company.

Modus Operandi: MLM and Social Media Ads

The ED revealed that QFX operated through a multi-level marketing (MLM) system, using websites, mobile apps, and social media advertisements to lure investors. Similar tactics were earlier used by YFX, another fraudulent forex trading platform that duped customers with false promises of high returns.

The agency further disclosed that apart

from QFX, Lavish Chaudhary was behind several other fraudulent investment schemes, including BotBro, TLC Coin, and Yorker FX, which were also projected as forex trading platforms. Shell Companies Used for Fund Transfers

Investigators found that funds collected from investors were funneled into bank accounts linked to shell companies such as Capter Money Solutions, NPay Box, and Tiger Digital Services. The ED has identified these entities as dummy firms used to launder money. The probe also revealed that QFX organizers held events in India and Dubai to attract more investors. Authorities are now expanding their investigation into other fraudulent schemes connected to the accused.

Rajasthan Announces ₹200 Crore Subsidy for Electric Vehicles



The Rajasthan government has launched a ₹200 crore e-vehicle promotion fund under its Electric Vehicle Policy-2022 to boost EV adoption in the

state. The initiative aligns with the FAME-2 scheme and offers State GST reimbursements and one-time grants for eligible EV buyers.

The subsidy applies to vehicles purchased on or after September 1, 2022, and registered in Rajasthan. Only vehicles bought within the state will qualify. Manufacturers registered under FAME-2 must enroll on the state's transport department portal before their EV models become eligible for the scheme.

Buyers can apply for the subsidy through the Vahan portal by entering their vehicle details, verifying their identity via OTP, and uploading bank details and supporting documents. Once approved, the subsidy amount will be directly transferred to their bank accounts.

Authorities have urged manufacturers, dealers, and buyers to apply early, as incentives are available for a limited number of vehicles per category.

Honda and Nissan Call Off Merger Plans



TPN Correspondent | Tokyo

Japanese auto giants Honda and Nissan have officially terminated their merger discussions, bringing an abrupt end to what could have been a game-changing partnership in the global automobile industry. The companies had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on December 23, 2024, to explore business integration, but announced on Thursday that they had mutually decided to scrap the plan.

Breakdown of Talks

The proposed merger was seen as a strategic move to compete with Tesla and Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturers. However, the discussions reportedly fell apart when Honda proposed making Nissan a subsidiary, rather than proceeding with the initially planned integration under a new joint holding company.

In a joint statement, the automakers clarified:

"Honda proposed changing the structure from establishing a joint holding company... to a structure where Honda would be the parent company and Nissan the subsidiary

through a share exchange."

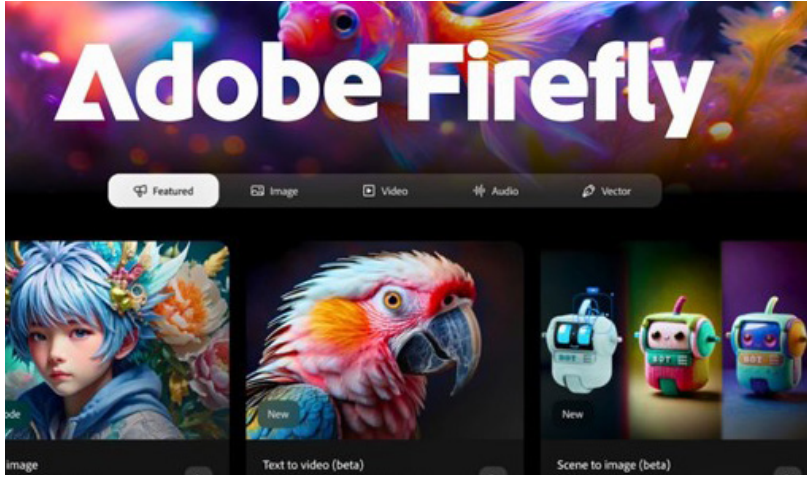
With both firms unable to reach common ground, they ultimately prioritized independent decision-making and operational agility over consolidation.

Industry Impact and Future Collaboration

The failed merger comes amid Nissan's financial struggles, with the company previously announcing massive job cuts and a 93% drop in first-half net profits last year. While the merger would have created the world's third-largest automaker, both companies now aim to navigate the EV transition separately. However, the firms confirmed that despite calling off the merger, they will continue collaborating on electrification and smart vehicle technologies, exploring strategic partnerships to enhance innovation and market competitiveness.

As the automotive industry shifts towards electric and intelligent vehicles, it remains to be seen how Honda and Nissan will individually adapt to growing competition in an increasingly volatile market.

Adobe Unveils AI-Powered Generate Video in Public Beta, Revamps Firefly Web App



Adobe has officially launched its AI-driven Generate Video tool in public beta, making it accessible to all users via the Firefly web app. The tool, powered by the Firefly Video Model, was initially teased in September 2024. Alongside this, Adobe has redesigned the Firefly web app, streamlining its layout to better showcase its suite of generative AI tools. The tech giant has also introduced two new Firefly subscription plans aimed at enhancing user experience.

Adobe Introduces Generate Video in Beta

Generate Video is Adobe's first AI-powered end-to-end video generation tool, offering users the ability to create 1080p videos at 24 frames per second using text prompts and images. The tool provides granular control, enabling users to define camera angles, motion, shooting distances, art styles, and other cinematographic elements. Currently, it can generate five-second-long videos, with Adobe promising

future upgrades, including a lower-resolution ideation model and a 4K model for production.

Users can also make detailed technical requests, such as locking in first and last frames for continuity, maintaining consistent colors and character details, and refining elements for professional output. PepsiCo, Stagwell, and Dentsu are already leveraging Generate Video for commercial applications.

Firefly Web App Redesigned with New Features

Originally launched in 2023 as a hub for Adobe's generative AI tools, the Firefly web app has been overhauled for a more intuitive user experience. The updated platform integrates seamlessly with Adobe's Creative Cloud applications, including Photoshop and Premiere Pro, ensuring smoother workflows. Adobe has also emphasized that Firefly AI models are trained on licensed and public domain datasets, making them "IP-friendly" and safe for com-

mercial use. In addition to Generate Video, Adobe has rolled out two new tools—Scene to Image and Translate Audio/Translate Video—on the Firefly platform. Unlike Generate Video, these tools are not free. Scene to Image transforms 3D sketches and reference shapes into high-quality images while allowing users to manipulate angles and perspectives for precise output. Translate Audio/Translate Video enables users to convert audio files and video channels into over 20 languages while preserving the original speaker's voice.

New Firefly Subscription Plans Introduced

To support the expansion of its AI offerings, Adobe has introduced two new Firefly subscription plans. The Firefly Standard plan, priced at \$9.99 per month, offers 2,000 video and audio credits and allows up to 20 five-second video generations at 1080p resolution. The Firefly Pro plan, available at \$29.99 per month, provides 7,000 credits and supports up to 70 video generations. Both plans come with unlimited access to Firefly's imaging and vector features, making them attractive options for creative professionals.

With these advancements, Adobe continues to push the boundaries of AI-powered creativity, catering to both casual users and professionals seeking advanced video and image generation capabilities.

Noise Master Buds Launched in India With Bose-Tuned Audio, 49dB ANC Support



Noise has launched its latest true wireless stereo (TWS) earphones, the Noise Master Buds, in India. Featuring 12.4mm titanium drivers and Bose-tuned audio, the new earbuds promise an enhanced sound experience. They support Adaptive Active Noise Cancellation (ANC) up to 49dB and offer dual connectivity, allowing users to pair them with two devices simultaneously. The Noise Master Buds boast a total battery life of up to 44 hours and come in a vinyl disc-inspired charging case.

Noise Master Buds Price and Availability

The Noise Master Buds are priced at Rs. 7,999 in India and are available for pre-booking via Amazon and the official Noise India e-store. They come in Onyx, Silver, and Titanium color options. Customers who pre-book the earbuds by paying Rs. 999 will receive a Rs. 2,000 discount coupon, bringing the effective price down to Rs. 5,999. Additionally, they will get exclusive perks worth Rs. 2,500. The earbuds will officially go on sale from February 26 via gonoise.com, Amazon, Reliance Digital, Croma, and Vijay Sales.

Noise Master Buds Specifications and Features
The Noise Master Buds are equipped with 12.4mm titanium drivers, tuned by Bose, and support LHDC 5.0 audio codec for high-resolution Bluetooth streaming. They offer 49dB ANC, Transparency mode, and an in-ear design with interchangeable ear tips. For improved voice calls, the earbuds feature a six-mic system with Environmental Noise Cancellation (ENC). Other features include dual connectivity, Google Fast Pair, Find My Device, spatial audio (without head tracking), and in-ear detection. They are also compatible with the NoiseFit app. In terms of battery life, the Noise Master Buds provide up to 44 hours of playback with

ANC turned off and 34 hours with ANC on, including the charging case. On a single charge, the earbuds last 4.5 hours with ANC on and six hours without ANC. A 10-minute quick charge provides up to six hours of playback.

The charging case, which features a USB Type-C port, is designed to resemble a vinyl disc, complete with a 2PM light bar mimicking a vinyl needle. Each earbud weighs 4.2g, while the case weighs 40g. With its premium features and Bose-tuned audio, the Noise Master Buds are set to compete in the high-end TWS market, offering a blend of superior sound quality, advanced noise cancellation, and long battery life.

Vlogger Sells Tea at Maha Kumbh Mela, Earns ₹7,000 in a Day



TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj

A vlogger's social experiment at the Maha Kumbh Mela has taken the internet by storm after he revealed his impressive earnings from selling tea. The content creator, known as @madcap_alive on Instagram, set up a tea stall at the event to explore the potential profits in such a massive gathering.

Selling tea at ₹10 per cup, he also carried a large container around the Mela grounds, offering tea to attendees. While demand dipped slightly in the afternoon, sales picked up again in the evening, allowing him to earn ₹7,000 by

the end of the day, with a profit of ₹5,000. His video, showcasing the experiment, has garnered over 13.5 million views.

Netizens reacted with amazement, with some humorously suggesting a career switch. One user calculated, "₹5,000 per day means ₹1,55,000 per month!" Another quipped, "Education is a scam." Many welcomed him to Prayagraj, dubbing him "Kumbh Chaiwala." The viral clip has sparked conversations about business opportunities at the grand religious gathering.

Zuckerberg Reveals He Faced Possible Death Sentence in Pakistan



TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg recently revealed in an interview with Joe Rogan that he was once at risk of being sentenced to death in Pakistan due to content posted on Facebook. The Pakistani government had accused Meta of allowing content that violated the country's strict blasphemy laws, leading to legal action against Zuckerberg personally.

The controversy stemmed from a user-posted image fea-

turing a drawing of Prophet Mohammed, which sparked outrage and a lawsuit seeking to hold Zuckerberg accountable. While he admitted he was not personally concerned for his safety—stating he had no plans to visit Pakistan—the incident underscored the broader challenges global tech platforms face when navigating free speech and local regulations.

"There are places around the world that just have different values that go against our free

expression values," Zuckerberg said, emphasizing the growing tension between Meta's commitment to free speech and the demands of certain governments.

Pakistan's blasphemy laws carry severe penalties, including imprisonment and even death, and have historically been used to prosecute individuals and organizations accused of violating religious norms. The incident with Meta highlights the ongoing struggle tech giants face when balancing their global reach with restrictive laws in certain countries.

Zuckerberg also stressed that foreign governments exert significant pressure on American tech companies, urging stronger support from the US government. He argued that threats of imprisonment and legal action against executives create an environment where tech companies require protection when facing politically motivated lawsuits abroad.

Meta has faced similar legal challenges in various countries, where governments have sought to regulate or censor content deemed offensive, harmful, or illegal under local laws.

Chilling Audio of Titanic Submersible Implosion Released

TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has released a chilling audio recording capturing the moment the Titan submersible imploded, killing all five passengers instantly. The 20-second clip, published by the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS), features a burst of static followed by a thunderous boom before fading into an eerie silence. Officials confirmed that the boom was the sound of the vessel succumbing to immense water pressure before reaching the Titanic wreck site in the North Atlantic Ocean on June 18, 2023. The recording, picked up by a moored passive acoustic device about 900 miles

away from the incident, was analyzed by the US Coast Guard, which described it as "the suspected acoustic signature of the Titan submersible implosion." The tragedy claimed the lives of renowned British adventurer Hamish Harding, Pakistani businessman Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood, French national Paul-Henri Nargeolet, and Stockton Rush, CEO of OceanGate Expeditions.

The loss of the submersible prompted intense scrutiny over its engineering and safety measures. Reports later revealed that the vessel had significant design flaws and had never been independently certified for deep-sea travel. Communication with the mothership was lost less

than two hours into the dive, triggering a frantic four-day search that ended with the discovery of debris by a remotely operated underwater vehicle.

In October 2023, the US Coast Guard announced the recovery of the last pieces of the wreckage, confirming earlier concerns about the sub's structural integrity. Investigators found that the Titan had been plagued with safety hazards during previous expeditions, with 70 reported equipment issues in 2021 and 48 more in 2022. The revelations raised further questions about the oversight and approval process for extreme deep-sea explorations.



Families Not to Travel with Team India for **Champions Trophy**



The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has implemented its new travel policy, which restricts players' families from accompanying them on short tours. This rule will take effect for the first time as the Indian cricket team departs for Dubai on February 15 to participate in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. Under the new guidelines, families can only join players on tours lasting 45 days or more, with a maximum allowance of two weeks. Since the Champions Trophy runs for less than a month, play-

ers' wives and partners will not be allowed to travel with the team. Team India, led by Rohit Sharma, will kick off its Champions Trophy campaign against Bangladesh on February 20. The high-voltage clash against Pakistan is scheduled for February 23, followed by the final group-stage match against New Zealand on March 2. India will play all its matches in Dubai, while the rest of the tournament unfolds across three venues in Pakistan, starting from February 19. A senior BCCI official, speak-

ing anonymously, confirmed the decision: "Unless there is a change in policy, families will not be accompanying the players. One senior player had inquired about it but was informed that the board's decision stands." The official also noted that if any exception is made, the player will have to bear all expenses, as the BCCI will not cover any additional costs. With the final scheduled for March 9, Team India will aim to bring home the prestigious trophy, despite the absence of their families during the tour.

Four **Indians** to Compete in Saudi Ladies International Golf Tournament



Four Indian golfers—Pranavi Urs, Aditi Ashok, Diksha Dagar, and Tvesa Malik—are set to compete in the sixth Saudi Ladies International, a \$5 million event featuring 112 players. Pranavi Urs, who finished 17th on the LET Merit List last season, had a strong pro start on the Women's Pro Tour, securing third-place finishes at the Dormy Open and Open de España. Diksha Dagar, ranked 29th on the LET, had an impressive start to 2025, reaching a play-off

at the Lalla Meryem Cup before finishing runner-up. She also recorded four Top-10 finishes last season and represented India at the Paris Olympics. Tvesa Malik, who finished 60th on the LET, regained her LET card and narrowly missed victory at the VP Swiss Bank Ladies Open, losing in a play-off. Aditi Ashok, who focused on the LPGA Tour, returns to LET events for this prestigious tournament.

IGI, Hansraj, Khalsa, SRCC, and SPM Shine in 11th Padmashri Shyam Lal Memorial Hockey Tournament

Indira Gandhi Institute of Physical Education and Sports Sciences (IGI), Hansraj College, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee (SPM) College emerged victorious in their league matches at the 11th Padmashri Shyam Lal Memorial Hockey Tournament.

IGI dominated Kirori Mal College 8-1, with Pulkit winning the Man of the Match award. Hansraj College

defeated Amity University 5-0, with Gusish earning the top honor. In the women's section, SPM College edged past Janaki Devi Memorial College 1-0, with Anshu named Player of the Match.

Khalsa College overcame Shyam Lal College Alumni 2-1, while SRCC secured a 3-1 win against IIT Delhi. SRCC's Siddharth was named Man of the Match, while IIT's Bhavesh received a Consolation Prize.

PGTI 2025: Yuvraj Sandhu Holds Lead After Round Three



Yuvraj Sandhu of Chandigarh maintained his lead for the third consecutive day at the PGTI Players Championship 2025, carding a steady two-under 68 in round three. With scores of 63-61-68, Yuvraj holds a one-shot lead at 18-un-

der 192 at Tollygunge Club, where he is a past winner. Bangladesh's Jamal Hossain (65-62-66) continued his impressive form, posting a 66 in round three to reach 17-under 193, closing in on the leader. Bengaluru's Rahil Gangjee (63-

67-66), competing at a familiar course from his childhood, shot 66 to secure third place at 14-under 196. Kolkata's golf legend SSP Chawrasia (71) finished the day tied for 14th place at nine-under 201.

CM Dhama Reviews Preparations for Amit Shah's National Games Visit

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama is overseeing preparations for Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to the closing ceremony of the 38th National Games at Gaulapar Stadium, Kathgodam, on February 14. The state government is ensuring smooth arrangements for the event, which has featured top athletes from across the country. CM Dhama's active involvement underscores the significance of the Games for Uttarakhand. On February 12, Dhama attended wrestling events in Haridwar and participated in the 'Mauli Samvad' National Sports Vision Conclave 2025. He also played hockey with



participants. Additionally, CM Dhama and IOA President PT Usha joined a tree plantation drive at Maharana Pratap Sports College, Raipur. On February 11, he in-

augurated the Mallakhamb competition in Khatima, emphasizing the global recognition of India's traditional sports under PM Narendra Modi's leadership.

Indian Women's Hockey Team Gears Up for FIH Pro League

Fresh off their Women's Asian Champions Trophy victory, the Indian Women's Hockey Team is set to begin its FIH Pro League campaign at the Kalinga Stadium from February 15 to 25. India will face England on February 15 and 16, followed by Spain on February 18 and 19. The team will also take on World No. 4 Germany and top-ranked Netherlands on February 21, 22, 24, and 25. Led by Arjuna Awardee Salima Tete with Navneet Kaur as her deputy, the squad blends experienced players like Savita and Vandana Katariya with rising stars such as Deepika and Sunelita Toppo. Captain Tete expressed confidence in the team's preparation, while head coach Harendra Singh emphasized the



importance of home support. After a disappointing previous season, India aims for a stronger performance this time.





Nani's Next Big Leap: A Dream Collaboration in the Works?



Natural Star Nani has carved an enviable niche in Tollywood, seamlessly blending artistic finesse with commercial appeal. From his early days excelling in class-oriented narratives to his more recent foray into mass entertainers, he has consistently expanded his cinematic footprint. With a string of consecutive hits to his credit, Nani's career is currently in a phase of remarkable momentum.

Presently, the actor is juggling multiple ventures, including HIT 3 and Paradise, while also presenting Megastar Chiranjeevi's upcoming film. Yet, amid his packed slate, an even more exciting possibility is on the horizon—one that has been long-awaited by both the actor and his ardent fans.

For nearly a decade, Nani has harbored a deep desire to collaborate with acclaimed filmmaker Sekhar Kammula. De-

spite their mutual admiration, circumstances never quite aligned for the project to take off. However, that long-standing wish may soon materialize, as reports suggest that the two are finally in discussions. Kammula, who is currently wrapping up Kubera with Dhanush, has initiated talks with Nani, setting the stage for what could be an extraordinary cinematic union. While the project is still in its early stages, an official announcement is anticipated soon. Should all go as planned, this much-anticipated film might commence production towards the end of the year, following Nani's completion of Paradise.

For fans who have long envisioned this collaboration, the wait may soon be over—marking yet another milestone in Nani's ever-evolving journey.

Vicky Kaushal Holds Katrina Kaif's Hand at Chhaava Screening, Fans Adore the Moment



Actor Vicky Kaushal attended the special screening of his upcoming film Chhaava in Mumbai, accompanied by his wife, actor Katrina Kaif. The film, also starring Rashmika Mandanna, is set to release in theatres on February 14. A video from the event, shared by a paparazzo, has captured the attention of fans, showcasing a sweet moment between the couple.

In the video, Vicky is seen holding Katrina's hand as he walks her to the designated photo spot at the event. Dressed in a dark outfit, Vicky looked stylish, while Katrina stunned in a sheer saree. The actor continued to hold her hand even as they posed for the photographers before heading inside. Vicky's brother, Sunny Kaushal, and other family members were also present at the screening.

Fans quickly reacted to the video, flooding the comment section with admiration. Many praised Katrina's look, while others called the couple 'royal' and showered them

with heart and evil-eye emojis. One fan referred to Katrina as the 'Queen of Bollywood,' while another simply wrote, "Hayee," expressing their adoration.

Known for their affectionate social media interactions, Vicky and Katrina often share glimpses of their relationship with fans. Just days before Valentine's Day, Katrina posted a video of Vicky on her Instagram Stories. In the clip, Vicky playfully described her as a "weird but honest being," to which Katrina responded with an angel emoji, highlighting their lighthearted bond.

Meanwhile, Vicky has been actively promoting Chhaava alongside Rashmika Mandanna. In the historical drama, he portrays Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, the son of Chhatrapati Shivaji, while Rashmika plays Maharani Yesubai, the Maratha queen. The film is set to bring the Maratha warrior's legacy to the big screen, generating significant anticipation among audiences.

Elvish Yadav Summoned by NCW Over Racist Remark on Chum Darang

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has summoned YouTuber Elvish Yadav for his controversial remarks against actor and Bigg Boss 18 contestant Chum Darang. According to a News18 report, Elvish has been asked to appear before the commission on February 17 following backlash over his comments.

The controversy erupted after Elvish made derogatory remarks about Chum Darang's name and ethnicity during a podcast. He also mocked her appearance in Gangubai Kathiawadi, stating, "Karanveer ko pakka COVID tha kyunki Chum kisko pasand aati hai bhai, itna taste kiska kharab hota hai! Aur Chum ke toh naam mein hi ashleeta hai... Naam Chum aur kaam Gangubai Kathiawadi mein kiya hai." His remarks triggered outrage, with many calling them racist and offensive.

The Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women (APSCW) strongly condemned Elvish's statements, terming them an insult not just to Chum but to women across Northeast India. In a letter to the NCW chairperson, APSCW chairperson Kenjum Pakam demanded strict action against the YouTuber, urging authorities to take legal steps against him.

Reacting to the controversy, Chum Darang took to social media to express her disappointment. Without naming Elvish,



she criticized the normalization of hate under the guise of humor. "Disrespecting someone's identity and name is not 'fun.' Mocking someone's achievements is not 'banter.' It's time we draw the line between humor and hate," she wrote, emphasizing that her hard work and her role in Gangubai Kathiawadi had also been disrespected.

Elvish, in response, attempted to downplay the criticism in a vlog. He claimed he had checked whether his remarks were racist and, upon realizing that they had

offended people, removed the controversial segment from his video. "Mujhe negativity chahiye hi nahi. Agar maan lo kisiko kharab lag raha hai mere bolne se, toh bhai, wo part maine remove kar diya," he stated.

The incident has sparked widespread debate on social media, with many demanding accountability for derogatory comments targeting the Northeast Indian community. As the NCW summons approaches, calls for action against Elvish continue to grow.

Thandel Achieves Break-Even in Six Days, Eyes ₹100 Crore Mark



Naga Chaitanya's Thandel has emerged as a major success, achieving break-even within just six days of its release. With a theatrical business target of approximately ₹40 crore, the film has already surpassed that mark, according to trade reports. The film has reportedly grossed over ₹70 crore so far, setting the stage for a strong second-week run.

With the deadline for increased ticket prices in Andhra Pradesh ending today, distributors are hopeful for a boost in collections from the region. The film's producers are also confident about pushing Thandel into the ₹100 crore club, banking on continued audience interest.

Upcoming releases like Laila and Brahma Anandham are not expected to pose a major threat, as they lack big stars. Additionally, Vishwak Sen's latest release has received an 'A' certificate, which may limit its appeal among family audiences, further benefiting Thandel.

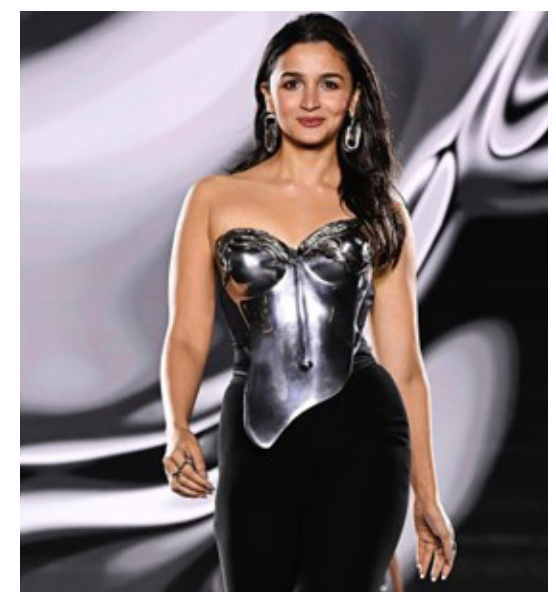
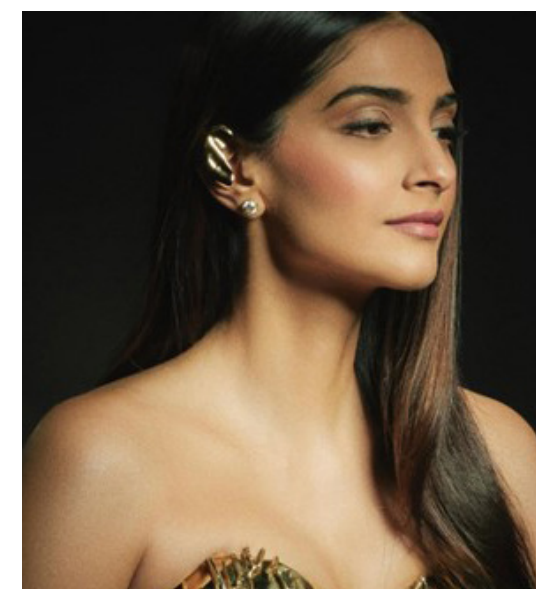
The production team is actively working on promotional strategies to sustain momentum during weekdays. With a slate of mid-range films set to release on February 21, Thandel's performance in the coming days will be crucial. If the film continues its current trend, it could deliver the highest box office numbers of Naga Chaitanya's career.

Sonam Kapoor vs. Alia Bhatt: A Gilded Fashion Duel in Gaurav Gupta's Iconic Breastplate

Sonam Kapoor has long been synonymous with bold sartorial choices, even as she has gradually distanced herself from Bollywood's relentless spotlight following her marriage to Anand Ahuja and the birth of their son, Vayu, in 2022. Her public appearances are now rare, curated moments of grandeur—and last night was one such spectacle.

Draped in an opulent creation by Gaurav Gupta, Sonam embodied an aesthetic that was equal parts regal and avant-garde. Styled by Rhea Kapoor, she adorned a striking gold breastplate featuring molten-like frozen drips, paired with a dramatic black ballgown midi. The ensemble's sculptural waist detail, a signature of Gupta's couture, added an architectural flourish. Complementing the look were softly curled tresses tucked behind one ear, muted nude makeup, and gold-tinted French tips—a masterclass in refined elegance.

Yet, while Sonam's look was undeniably arresting, it carried an air of déjà vu. The reason? This very breastplate had already left an indelible mark on the fashion landscape when Alia Bhatt donned it months earlier in a striking silver rendition. In September 2024, Alia made her runway



debut at the L'Oréal Paris - Le Défilé show in an outfit that exuded futuristic drama. As noted by the designer's official archives, she wore a silver metal-cast breastplate intricately molded with a swan's head entwined with a serpent's sinuous body, paired with black sharara trousers. Styled by Payal Kapadia, her look was elevated with oversized geometric hoops, slick wet hair, and a luminous silver-tinted makeup

palette. Two muses. One emblematic piece. Distinctive interpretations. Sonam's take was classic, embodying old-world opulence with a contemporary twist, while Alia's approach was sleek, futuristic, and audacious. Both women served a compelling vision—but the question remains: who owned the moment?