

Weather Forecast

HYDERABAD	VIJAYAWADA	TIRUPATHI
H 33° C L 25° C	H 35° C L 26° C	H 36° C L 26° C

KAVITHA PREPARING TO SHOW HER STRENGTH

Kavitha Targets Sanjay's Defection

Jagityal Braces for a Fierce Political Battle

BRS Determined to Reclaim Jagityal

BRS Plans Strong Counter attack

Supreme Court Verdict Crucial for BRS

Congress Infighting Works in Kavitha's Favor

Kavitha's Strategic Moves Intensify

TPN PARDHU

Hyderabad, Feb 14

Telangana politics is heating up, with the Jagityal Assembly constituency becoming the latest battleground. Speculations are rife that BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha is preparing to contest the upcoming by-elections. Targeting MLA Dr. Sanjay, Kavitha has alleged that he won the 2023 elections solely due to her efforts and campaign strategies.

Kavitha's Role in Sanjay's Victory

MLC Kavitha claims that her tireless efforts played a crucial role in Dr. Sanjay's victory against Congress leader Jeevan Reddy in the 2023 assembly elections. She states that she united various communities in Jagityal and led an extensive campaign to ensure his win. However, the political landscape in Telangana changed, and in a surprising move, Sanjay defected from BRS to join the Congress. These developments have angered Kavitha and the BRS leadership, who see his defection as a betrayal.

BRS Seeks Action Against Party

Defectors

BRS has strongly opposed Sanjay's shift to Congress. Party sources indicate that strict action, including the expulsion of defecting MLAs, is on the horizon. The Supreme Court is set to deliver its verdict on this matter on the 18th of this month, and BRS leaders are optimistic that the ruling will be in their favor. They firmly believe that by-elections in Jagityal are inevitable.

Kavitha Intensifies Political Activity in Jagityal

Amidst these political tensions, Kavitha has already launched an aggressive campaign in Jagityal. She has been holding multiple meetings with local leaders and strategizing her moves to strengthen BRS in the region. Determined to secure the seat at any cost, she is working hard to consolidate her position before the by-elections are officially announced.

Sanjay's defection to Congress has not only created turmoil in BRS but has also sparked

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Microsoft Expands in Hyderabad

CM Revanth Calls AI the Future of Telangana

Hyderabad Becomes a Global AI Hub

Microsoft's New Facility Boosts Jobs & Innovation

Google to Support AI Startups & Governance

AI Training for 1.2 Lakh People in Telangana

Microsoft's ₹15,000 Crore Investment in AI

Telangana Signs MoUs for AI Development

TPN Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 14

Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy emphasized that artificial intelligence (AI) is the future and hailed Microsoft's expansion in Hyderabad as a significant milestone in the city's journey. Speaking at the inauguration of Microsoft's new building, the CM expressed pride in the long-standing partnership between Hyderabad and the global IT giant, which recently completed 25 years in India.

Microsoft's newly opened facility in Gachibowli spans 1.1 million square feet and can accommodate 2,500 employees. As part of its expansion, Microsoft has committed to

investing an additional ₹15,000 crore in Telangana over the coming years, making Hyderabad the company's largest data hub worldwide.

The Telangana government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft to establish an AI Center of Excellence in Hyderabad. This center will feature an AI Knowledge Hub and cloud-based AI infrastructure, focusing on research, case studies, and AI-driven innovations. The partnership also includes the ADVANTA(I)GE TELANGANA initiative, through which AI education will be introduced in 500 government schools and

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KCR to Chair BRS Strategy Meet

BRS Plans Silver Jubilee Celebrations

Party Membership Drive on Agenda

KCR to Lead from the Front

BRS Cadre Mobilization Begins

BRS to Restructure for the Future

TPN Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 14

Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) president K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) will chair a crucial working group meeting at Telangana Bhavan on February 19 at 1 PM. The meeting will bring together the state working group, district party presidents, current and former MPs, MLCs, MLAs, corporation chairpersons, zilla parishad chairpersons, DCCB and DCMS presidents, and constituency in-charges to discuss the party's silver jubilee celebrations, membership registration, party structure, and other key issues.



tions. The party aims to regroup, strengthen its structure, and strategize for the future.

KCR to Finally Step Out of His Farmhouse

This meeting marks a significant moment for BRS as it is the first major gathering since KCR's defeat in the general elec-

After months of political silence, KCR is set to step out of his

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BJP is against religious reservations

Congress Accused of Betraying BC Communities

Local Elections Delay: Fear of Losing?

Violating Constitution by Postponing Polls: BJP

Development Stalled Due to Lack of Sarpanches

Congress Will Face Backlash in MLC Elections



TPN Correspondent

Hyderabad, Feb 14

Union Minister Bandi Sanjay has strongly criticized the Congress government in Telanga-

na for including Muslims in the Backward Classes (BC) list, calling it an injustice to BCs. He stated that BJP is firmly against religious-based reservations

and accused Congress of insincerity in implementing BC reservations.

Bandi Sanjay argued that by adding Muslims to the BC list, rightful reservations for BC communities are being compromised. He warned that this move would trigger a strong backlash from the Hindu community and vowed that the Congress would face consequences in the upcoming MLC elections. He demanded that if Congress is truly sincere, it should remove Muslims from the BC list and implement the promised 42% reservation for BCs.

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Putta Madhu in Trouble?

CBI Probe for Lawyer Murders?

Supreme Court to Decide on CBI Probe

Murder Case Turns Political

Two weeks for counter



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Telangana's Economy in Crisis?

Telangana Went from Surplus to Debt
Centre Treats All States Equally: Sitharaman
New Income Tax Bill Sparks Opposition
Tax Bill Referred to Select Committee



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Bhatti, Komatireddy Urge Speedy RRR Construction

- **Support for Telangana’s Aviation Growth**
- **Protecting Encroached R&B Properties**
- **Roads to Follow SC/ST Sub-Plan Act**

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu and Roads & Buildings (R&B) Minister Komatireddy Venkata Reddy have directed officials to expedite the construction of the Regional Ring Road (RRR) and take necessary measures to promote the aviation sector. The instructions were given during the pre-budget meeting of the R&B department held at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat on Thursday.

The ministers emphasized that there is no shortage of funds for the RRR project and assured



that allocations will be made as work progresses. They reviewed the Detailed Project Report (DPR) and 3D designs and urged officials to speed up the construction process. They also instructed officials to prepare a comprehensive report on encroached R&B properties across Telangana and take steps to prevent the alienation of valuable

assets.

The meeting also focused on the development of roads under the SC and ST Sub-Plan Act. The ministers criticized the previous administration for neglecting the act and stressed that the Congress government is committed to its full implementation. They instructed officials to

ensure that funds are utilized effectively and that local leaders and communities are kept informed about ongoing projects.

Additionally, the ministers highlighted the importance of developing district-to-Hyderabad road connectivity and fast-tracking the construction of HAM (Hybrid Annuity Model) roads. They reiterated the government’s commitment to enhancing the aviation sector and instructed officials to make necessary arrangements for the construction of new airports.

Special Chief Secretaries Ramakrishna Rao and Vikas Raj, Deputy CM’s Special Secretary Krishna Bhaskar, Secretary Dasari Harichandana, Finance Secretary Haritha, and other officials participated in the meeting.

High Court Postpones Hearing on KCR, Harish Rao’s Petition

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14

The Telangana High Court has postponed the hearing of the petition filed by former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) and former Minister T. Harish Rao against the orders of the Bhupalapally District Court in the Medigadda Barrage case. The next hearing has been scheduled for the 20th of this month.



tion. During the previous hearing, the High Court had suspended the district court’s orders and issued notices to the Public Prosecutor and Rajalingamurthy.

At today’s hearing, Rajalingamurthy’s lawyer sought additional time to file a counter-affidavit. Considering this request, the High Court adjourned the matter to September 20.

The Medigadda Barrage, part of the ambitious Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, has been at the center of controversy due to structural issues. The legal proceedings are being closely watched as they may impact the political and administrative discourse surrounding the project.

The Bhupalapally District Court had earlier issued notices to KCR, Harish Rao, and others based on a revision petition filed by Nagavelli Rajalingamurthy. The petitioner alleged that KCR and other officials were responsible for the embankment issues at Medigadda Barrage, constructed as part of the Kaleshwaram project.

Challenging this, KCR and Harish Rao approached the High Court, arguing that the Bhupalapally District Court lacked the jurisdiction to entertain the revision pe-

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Microsoft Expands in Hyderabad

integrated into governance and public services.

Additionally, the Telangana government has launched three AI training programs in collaboration with Microsoft, aiming to upskill 1.2 lakh individuals across the state. The initiatives include:

- AI training for 50,000 students
- AI-Industry Pro, providing skills to 20,000 professionals
- AI-Govern Initiative, training 50,000 government officials in AI, cybersecurity, and digital productivity

On the same day, the Telangana government signed another MoU with Google to set up an AI center in Hyderabad. The Google AI Center will support startups and focus on

AI applications in agriculture, education, transportation, and digital governance.

CM Revanth Reddy expressed confidence that these collaborations with Microsoft and Google will create more employment opportunities and strengthen Telangana’s startup ecosystem. He thanked the leadership of both tech giants for trusting Telangana and contributing to the Telangana Rising Vision.

It is noteworthy that Google had earlier announced the establishment of India’s first Google Safety Engineering Center (GSEC) in Hyderabad. These developments mark a major boost for Hyderabad’s position as a leading AI and technology hub.

BJP is against religious reservations

Accusing Congress of betraying BCs, he called on the community to recognize the party’s alleged deception. He also questioned Congress’s hesitation to conduct local body elections, alleging that the delay is due to fear of losing.

Bandi Sanjay highlighted that postponing local elections beyond March would result in Telangana losing 15th Finance Commission funds. He criticized the government for already missing out on two rounds of funding. He also accused Congress of violating the 73rd and 74th Constitution-

al Amendments, which mandate that local body elections be held every five years.

Taking a dig at the ruling party, he said merely carrying the Constitution is not enough; it must be implemented. He questioned how village development could continue without elected Sarpanches and warned that delaying elections is crippling rural governance.

With the local elections approaching, Bandi Sanjay’s remarks set the stage for a fierce political battle between BJP and Congress in Telangana.

KCR to Chair BRS Strategy Meet

farmhouse and take a more direct approach in opposing the Congress-led government. Since his electoral defeat, KCR has been running party affairs from his farmhouse, despite persistent criticism from Congress leaders. However, sources indicate that he has been carefully monitoring political developments and

is now ready to lead from the front.

With the February 19 meeting, KCR is expected to mobilize party cadres, intensify political activities, and directly question the ruling government. This meeting is seen as a significant step in BRS’s efforts to reclaim its political foothold in Telangana.

KAVITHA PREPARING TO SHOW HER STRENGTH

unrest within Congress itself. Many senior Congress leaders, particularly those close to Jeevan Reddy, have expressed their dissatisfaction with Sanjay’s entry into the party. While party elders have intervened to manage internal conflicts, the tension still lingers.

Kavitha Leveraging Congress Infighting

Recognizing the internal conflicts within Congress, Kavitha is looking to turn them to her advantage. She is engaging in back-to-back meetings in Jagityal, aiming to consolidate support and weaken Congress from within. Despite being a traditional Congress stronghold, Jagityal saw

an upset victory for Sanjay in 2023, largely attributed to Kavitha’s strategic campaigning. Now, with Sanjay in Congress, BRS is keen on reclaiming the seat, and reports suggest that KCR is considering fielding Kavitha as the party’s candidate.

A High-Stakes Political Showdown

BRS is determined to put up a strong fight in the by-elections. With Sanjay likely to contest from Congress, the possibility of Kavitha representing BRS makes this an intense political battle. If she officially enters the race, Jagityal is set to witness a fierce electoral contest, with both parties pulling out all the stops to claim victory.

Putta Madhu in Trouble?

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14

The sensational double murder case of advocates Gattu Vamana Rao and Nagamani, which took place on February 17, 2021, in Kalvacharla, Ramagiri mandal, Manthani constituency, may soon be handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The Supreme Court, in hearings held on January 21 and February 11, directed the defense to file a counter within two weeks.

During the hearing, the CBI lawyer stated that there is no objection to conducting the investigation if ordered by the court. The Telangana government has also clarified that it has no objection to the case being transferred to the CBI. Gattu Kishan Rao, the father of the deceased Vamana Rao, argued that his son and daughter-in-law were brutally murdered in public, and the crime was captured in multiple videos that were aired on television and social media.

With both the CBI and Telangana government agreeing to an investigation, discussions have intensified in Peddapalli district about the potential Supreme Court verdict.

Observers believe that if the case is handed over to the CBI, it could lead to a major breakthrough in uncovering hidden links and past crimes in the region.

Will the Case Unravel a Bigger Conspiracy?

If the CBI takes over the case, it may not only focus on the double murder but also expose other criminal activities that have taken place in the Manthani region over the last two decades. Kishan Rao has alleged that the investigation so far has not been transparent or impartial.

One of the accused in the case is the nephew of former ZP chairman Putta Madhukar, leading to speculation about his involvement. While the police have not officially confirmed Madhu’s role, Kishan Rao strongly believes that he played a key role in the crime.

With the fourth anniversary of the murder approaching on February 17, all eyes are now on the Supreme Court’s decision. If the case is transferred to the CBI, it could lead to new revelations and bring many more individuals under scrutiny.

Telangana’s Economy in Crisis?

TPN Correspondent
Telangana, Feb 14

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman made key remarks in the Rajya Sabha regarding Telangana’s financial condition. She pointed out that Telangana was a surplus state before the bifurcation but has since fallen into debt. She clarified that the NDA government does not discriminate against any state and is not blaming any political party. Highlighting the Centre’s contributions, Sitharaman mentioned the establishment of a railway station in Medak, where Indira Gandhi once

won, and the revival of the Ramagundam fertilizer factory. Meanwhile, the Lok Sabha passed a new income tax bill despite opposition protests. Sitharaman introduced the bill and requested that the draft income tax resolution be sent to the House Select Committee. The committee is expected to submit its report on the first day of the next session. She assured that the tax bill has been designed to be simple and efficient. Following the proceedings, the Speaker adjourned the House until the 10th of next month.

Govt to Clear Hostel Rent Arrears Introduce Vocational Courses in Gurukuls



TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14

Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka Mallu announced that the government will immediately clear rent arrears for welfare hostels and Gurukuls operating in rented buildings. He made the statement during a pre-budget meeting of the BC Welfare and Transport Departments at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat on Thursday, alongside Minister Ponnampalraj.

The ministers assured that funds would be allocated for the repair of welfare hostels and Gurukuls. They also directed that mosquito nets be installed on windows and main doors for better hygiene and safety.

Bhatti Vikramarka emphasized that BC study centers should function as job cre-

ation hubs, with coaching aligned to the Telangana Public Service Commission (TSPSC) job calendar. He urged officials to focus on competitive exams like DSC and banking.

Highlighting the importance of skill development, the ministers stressed the need to introduce vocational courses in Gurukuls alongside regular academic programs. They noted that residential education provides an ideal setting for skill-based training.

The meeting also discussed plans to procure electric buses for the RTC, establish charging stations, and explore revenue sources for RTC asset management. BC Welfare Principal Secretary Sridhar, RTC MD Sajjanar, Transport Commissioner Surendra Mohan, and other officials attended.

Subhaprad Patel Meets KCR Discusses BC Caste Census Errors

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14

Former BC Commission member Subhaprad Patel met BRS chief K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) at his residence in Erravelli on Thursday to discuss discrepancies in the BC caste census conducted by the Congress government.



During the meeting, Patel recalled his visit to Tamil Nadu as a State BC Commission member and presented KCR with a book on BC reservations in Tamil Nadu, along with reports on the state’s 69% reservation model.

KCR accused the Congress government of misleading the public on BC reservations, stating that it lacks

sincerity in implementing the promised 42% quota. He urged Patel to expose the alleged fraud and mobilize public support to fight for proper implementation.

Highlighting BRS’s decade-long efforts for BC welfare and reservations, KCR assured Patel that his party would stand by those challenging the government’s policies. He encouraged Patel to lead a movement against Congress and pledged BRS’s support in the struggle.

BRS Will Maintain Pink Book, Says Kavitha

BRS Will Track Harassment and Retaliate
Revanth Reddy Fears Social Media Criticism
Congress Betrayed BCs on Reservation Promises
BRS Demands Separate Bills for BC Reservations

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
BRS MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has accused the ruling Congress party of harassing her party leaders and vowed political retaliation once BRS returns to power. She stated that her party would maintain a “Pink Book” to track the alleged injustices and ensure payback in due course.

Speaking at an event, Kavitha criticized Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, alleging that he is afraid of social media criticism and reacts aggressively to on-line dissent. “Even if someone posts against the government on Facebook or Twitter, the po-

lice arrive at their house to arrest them,” she claimed.

She also took a jab at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, saying, “He carries the Constitution in his pocket, but Revanth Reddy is rewriting it as he pleases.” Kavitha emphasized that their late mentor, Professor K. Jayashankar, had taught them how to resist political harassment and organize movements, warning that BRS would retaliate when back in power.

Demand for Separate BC Reservation Bills
Kavitha accused the Congress government of neglecting its promises regarding the BC



(Backward Class) Bill. She alleged that the bill was merely passed in the Assembly and sent to the Centre without further efforts. She demanded that instead of a single bill, the government introduce three separate bills:
1. 46% Reservation in Education
2. 46% Reservation in Jobs
3. 42% Reservation in Local Body Elections

She reminded the Congress party of its election promise to provide 42% reservation for BCs in local body elections and urged them to act swiftly to avoid legal hurdles. She also suggested that the government provide a one-month extension for the caste census, considering its significance for BC welfare.

Konda Surekha Appears in Court for Defamation Case

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
Telangana Environment Minister Konda Surekha appeared before the Nampally court on Thursday in connection with a defamation case filed by actor Akkineni Nagarjuna.



the court ordered the registration of a case against her. Surekha had previously been asked to appear before the court on October 23.

The case stems from comments made by Surekha last year, where she alleged that BRS leader K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) played a role in the divorce of actors Naga Chaitanya and Samantha Ruth Prabhu. Nagarjuna, in his petition, claimed that these remarks defamed him and his family.

The Nampally court had earlier summoned the minister on December 12 for a hearing. After reviewing the case,

The controversy began when Surekha, on October 2, accused KTR of influencing Samantha and Naga Chaitanya’s separation. She claimed that KTR demanded Samantha’s presence in exchange for not demolishing the N-Convention Center. Nagarjuna denied these allegations and took legal action, leading to the ongoing defamation proceedings.

MP Etala Walks 10 Km, Takes Holy Dip at Kumbh Mela



TPN Correspondent
Prayagraj, Feb 14
Malkajgiri BJP MP Etala Rajender participated in the Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj, taking a holy bath at the Triveni Sangam in the early hours of the day. Accompanied by former Zahirabad MP Bibi Patil and others, Etala opted to forgo special protocol for public representatives and walked nearly 10 kilometers with devotees before reaching the sacred site.

After taking a dip in the Sangam, he performed pujas along with local priests, who later conducted special rituals for him and offered Tirtha Prasad. His supporters shared videos of his pilgrimage on social media, showing him walking alongside the crowd. The ongoing Mahakumbh Mela, which commenced on January 13, has already witnessed around 45 crore devotees taking a holy dip. With the event concluding on Mahashivratri, February 26, the government expects an additional 5 crore pilgrims on the final day, making extensive arrangements for the occasion.

"KP Vivekananda Slams Govt Over ₹200 Cr Caste Census Blunder"

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
BRS MLA KP Vivekananda has accused the Congress government of wasting ₹200 crore on the caste census survey, calling it a failure that has insulted weaker sections. He alleged that the survey, conducted within two months, was poorly executed and manipulated caste population figures.



Vivekananda criticized Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, stating that even

he admitted the survey’s shortcomings. “How can a government that cannot conduct a proper survey ensure good governance?” he questioned. He claimed the Congress government is facing backlash from all sections of society and that BC associations, along with BRS, are demanding a re-survey. Accusing the Revanth Reddy-led government of regressive policies, Vivekananda asserted that the caste census has done more harm than good, particularly to the weaker sections.

BRS Alleges Sand Mining Scam Under Revanth Govt

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
BRS leader Manne Krishank has accused the Revanth Reddy government of facilitating illegal sand mining, causing a massive loss to the state treasury. Speaking at a press conference at Telangana Bhavan on Thursday, Krishank alleged that sand revenue, which previously exceeded ₹800 crore annually under the KCR government, has significantly declined due to corruption. He claimed that the revenue from sand, which should benefit the state, is instead going into the pockets of Revanth Reddy’s brother, Enumula Kondal Reddy. He criticized



the government for allowing unrestricted sand mining, violating environmental regulations, and enabling large-scale smuggling in the name of free sand for Indiramma houses. Krishank demanded transparency in sand sales and called for a disclosure of all transactions in the Assembly. He accused the government of changing five Mineral Development Corporation MDs within a year to manipulate records. The BRS leader warned that his party would raise this issue in the Assembly and vowed to expose further details on the alleged sand mining scam.

MP Chamala Admits Congress Lapses, Praises BRS Opposition

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
Yadadri Bhuvanagiri MP Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy has made sensational remarks on the political landscape of Telangana. His statements about the ruling Congress party and the opposition BRS are currently gaining widespread attention. Speaking about the protests organized by the BRS against the government’s shortcomings, Chamala acknowledged that the opposition party is playing its role effectively. He admitted that the Congress has failed to effectively communicate the gov-

ernment’s schemes and achievements to the public. Additionally, MP Chamala expressed his desire to become the working president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC). During a media interaction in Delhi on Thursday morning, he stated that there is no significant opposition among the people against the Congress government, despite the aggressive campaigning by other parties. His remarks have sparked discussions within political circles, highlighting internal concerns within the ruling party.



TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
Congress leader Addanki Dayakar launched a scathing attack on BRS leader K.T. Rama Rao (KTR), accusing him of turning Telangana into a casino hub. Speaking to the media, Dayakar alleged that the police operation exposing MLA Pochampally Srinivas Reddy’s activities had revealed deeper corruption. He claimed that those who leased properties to criminals were equally guilty.

Dayakar further accused KTR of engaging in the drug trade while his

father, KCR, remained in a farmhouse. He blamed KTR for the alleged illegal activities taking place at Pochampally Srinivas Reddy’s farmhouse and questioned the MLC’s relevance, claiming he was only known due to his connections with KTR.

Meanwhile, Addanki Dayakar expressed his hope of securing an MLC seat under the MLA quota, stating that the party high command would decide his future.

Referring to reports of large-scale cockfighting at TRS MLC Pocham-

pally Srinivas Reddy’s farmhouse in Tolkatta, under Moinabad limits, Dayakar accused KTR of being the mastermind behind the lawlessness. He claimed the BRS leadership had exploited Telangana’s people, questioning KTR’s right to chant “Jai Telangana” after allegedly engaging in illegal activities.

Taking a jibe at BRS, Dayakar said the KCR family had looted the state, leading to the defection of several MLAs. He also accused KTR of involvement in land scams and declared that the Congress would expose his wrongdoings.



TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
Former MP V. Hanumantha Rao (VH) defended the caste census and welcomed the government’s decision to conduct a re-survey from September 16 to 28. Speaking at Gandhi Bhavan, he stated that the re-survey was necessary to clear misconceptions, not because of errors.

VH criticized opposition parties for questioning the caste census, asking why BJP leaders were not demanding similar surveys in other states. He emphasized that Sonia Gandhi had advocated for a caste census alongside the population census and challenged the BJP to clarify its stance.

He urged the government to

allocate the budget based on the Backward Classes (BC) population and encouraged people to participate in the re-survey by providing caste and sub-caste details. He accused the previous government of suppressing the Comprehensive Family Survey and reiterated Rahul Gandhi’s vision for Telangana. VH also stated that BCs would gradually gain more MLA and MP opportunities, urging KCR to support the survey.

Addanki Dayakar Slams KTR, Seeks MLC Post



Multiplex Owners Challenge HC Order on Kids’ Entry

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
The Multiplex Owners Association has filed a petition challenging the Telangana High Court’s single bench verdict restricting the entry of children into cinema theatres during late-night and early-morning shows. The High Court recently ruled that children below the age of sixteen should not be allowed inside theatres between 11 PM and 11 AM. It also directed the government to discuss the matter with all stakeholders and take an appropriate decision.

However, the Multiplex Owners Association has appealed against this order, arguing that the restriction will lead to significant financial losses for theatre managements. The petitioners’ lawyer stated that imposing such a ban would negatively impact business operations and audience flexibility.



During the hearing, the Chief Justice’s bench clarified that it could not interfere with the appeal while the petition was still pending before the single bench. The court advised the petitioners to file an implied petition within the existing case before the single bench. Following this suggestion, the petitioners agreed and subsequently withdrew the appeal petition.

The case has sparked a debate among various stakeholders, with some supporting the High Court’s decision as a protective measure for children, while theatre owners argue that it could hurt their business. The Telangana government is expected to conduct discussions with relevant parties before making a final decision on implementing the restriction.

Lavanya Claims Life in Danger, Makes Sensational Allegations



TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
Lavanya, who gained prominence in the Raj Tarun case, has once again made shocking statements, claiming that her life is in danger. Speaking to the media, she expressed fear for her safety, alleging that Mastan Sai and his parents were threatening to kill her. She stated that she is afraid even to step outside and that she does not know if she will survive.

Lavanya also addressed a viral video, claiming that Mastan Sai recorded her phone conversation without her consent. She urged the police to investigate the sale of videos involving young girls and emphasized that she is the only one fighting against Mastan Sai. She fears that she may lose her life in this battle.

“They are threatening me and making threatening phone calls, warning me to stop or face dire consequences.

As long as Raj Tarun was involved, they didn’t dare to let me come forward. Since he is a well-known figure in the film industry, I was targeted. Despite this, I stood my ground and fought for myself,” Lavanya stated.

She further alleged that Raj Tarun has not been active in work for the past seven to eight months and urged the public to focus on why Mastan Sai is making videos instead of discussing Raj Tarun. She appealed to authorities for protection and demanded strict action against those responsible.

Etala Rajender Visits Injured Naveen Chari, Seeks Better Treatment



TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
Malkajgiri MP Etala Rajender visited Naveen Chari, who is undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Saroor Nagar, after being injured in Madhya Pradesh. On his way to the Kumbh Mela, Etala took time to meet Naveen Chari’s family and offer support.

Earlier, while Naveen was admitted to Jabalpur government hospital, Etala spoke to him over the phone to inquire about his condition. During his visit to the private hospital, he interacted with the hospital management and doctors, gathering details about Naveen’s treatment and recovery progress.

Etala urged the hospital authorities to provide the best possible medical care for Naveen Chari. His visit reassured the family, as he emphasized the need for quality healthcare and support during the recovery process.

Decibel Dash 2025: A Global Movement for Hearing Awareness

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
The Decibel Dash 2025 – Run for Hearing, organized by the Maurya Foundation and MicroCare ENT Super Specialty Hospitals, is set to take place on March 2, 2025, at Gachibowli Stadium, Hyderabad. This initiative aims to raise awareness about hearing health and support individuals with hearing impairments. The event features a 2K Fun Walk, 5K Run, 10K Challenge, and a Virtual Run, encouraging participation from all sections of society.



The poster for Decibel Dash 2025 was unveiled at Columbus Coffee – The Cozy Eatery, PVR Central, Punjagutta X Roads by key figures

including Dr. Sri Prakash, Dr. Ashwini Amareshwar, Judge Amitha Rani Lok Adalat RR Dist, Dr. Sonali Chaturvedi, Dr. Premnath

Big Relief for Manchu Mohan Babu: Granted Anticipatory Bail



TPN Correspondent
New Delhi, Feb 14
Veteran actor Manchu Mohan Babu has secured anticipatory bail in an assault case, bringing significant relief to him amid ongoing legal troubles.

The case stems from a property dispute between his sons, Manchu Vishnu and Manoj, which reportedly escalated at Mohan Babu’s Jalapalli farmhouse. During the altercation, Mohan Babu allegedly lost control and attacked a journalist with a microphone, causing a serious head injury. The journalist later filed a case against him, accusing him of attempt to murder. Mohan Babu had approached multiple courts seeking bail but faced repeated rejections. Finally, he applied for anticipatory bail in the Supreme Court, and after several legal arguments, the court granted him relief on Thursday. The ruling marks a major legal victory for the actor.

Fake Job Scam Uncovered in Telangana Secretariat

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
A fake job scam has come to light in the Telangana Secretariat, where fraudsters allegedly created forged job appointment orders using the name of Chief Secretary Shanti Kumar. Several unsuspecting individuals, believing these orders to be genuine, arrived at the Secretariat seeking their appointments.

Authorities have launched an investigation into the possible involvement of Secretariat employees in the scam. It has also been revealed that fake employees have been roaming inside the Secretariat for the past two weeks.

On Monday, a man posing as an IAS officer named Balakrishna was caught by staff members. Recently, officials also detained a fake revenue employee, a fake MRO, two fake IAS officers, and fake attendants. The police are intensifying their probe to identify those behind the scam and prevent further security breaches.



Swami Vivekananda’s Legacy Honored in Hyderabad

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
Governor Jishnu Dev Varma highlighted Swami Vivekananda’s visit to Hyderabad on February 13, 1893, as a historic milestone in the spread of Sanatana Dharma and the Ramakrishna Mission.

Speaking at a youth convention held at Mahbub College, Secunderabad, in collaboration with the College Society and Ramakrishna Math, the Governor emphasized that Vivekananda’s speech at Mahbub College laid the foundation for his iconic address at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. He noted that Puranas and Anushtana Vedanta were key themes in his speeches.

stated, “Youngsters with iron muscles, steel nerves, and diamond determination can make India a world leader.” He urged them to embody Swami Vivekananda’s ideals and work towards national progress.

Ramakrishna Math President Swami Bodhamayananda emphasized that Vivekananda’s teachings enhance self-confidence and provide physical, mental, and spiritual strength.

Mahbub College Educational Society Chairman PL Srinivas, SV IT Chairman Prem Narayana, Vice Presidents Nares and MP Rabindranath Bhagwat Varanasi Secretary Vinod were among the attendees. Students also performed cultural programs, adding vibrancy to the event.



Harish Rao Slams Congress Over Healthcare Neglect

TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14
Former Minister Harish Rao has accused the Congress government of failing to provide basic medical services to the poor, criticizing the closure and poor functioning of village and Basti hospitals across Telangana.

He questioned the government’s inaction over the locked Keesara Health and Wellness Center in Medchal district and the deteriorating condition of Basti hospitals in Hyderabad, Nizamabad, Adilabad, and Mahabubnagar. He alleged that outpatient visits in these hospitals have drastically declined due to staff shortages and lack of proper management.



Harish Rao emphasized that the BRS government had established 500 Bas-

ti hospitals and village health centers, making Telangana’s healthcare system a national model. However, he claimed that under Congress, these hospitals are closing early, doctors are irregular, and essential medicines like BP, diabetes, and thyroid drugs are unavailable.

He also pointed out the decline of Telangana Diagnostic Centers, where free tests for the poor are being affected by server issues, staff shortages, and mismanagement.

BRS demanded immediate government intervention to revive village and Basti hospitals and ensure proper healthcare services for the poor.

Govt Grants Another Chance for Caste Census Participation



**TPN Correspondent
Telangana, Feb 14**
In a significant move, the Telangana government has announced that those who missed the comprehensive caste census survey will get another opportunity to participate between February 16 and 28. Minister Ponnam Prabhakar stated that this decision aligns with the state's commitment to inclusive governance, making Telangana a role model for the country in caste enumeration.

At a meeting with BC leaders, Minister Prabhakar reaffirmed that 42% reservations for BCs in local body elections, education, and employment will be

granted legal status. A cabinet meeting in early March will be followed by a special Assembly session to introduce a bill ensuring these reservations. A delegation led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy will visit Delhi to seek support from national leaders.

He clarified that no caste-wise figures have been officially released and accused opposition parties of spreading misinformation. To facilitate participation in the census, a toll-free number and special counters in MPDO offices have been set up. Online data collection will also be introduced. PCC Chief Mahesh Kumar Goud reit-

erated the government's commitment to the Kamareddy BC Declaration and urged political unity, similar to Tamil Nadu, for BC welfare. He criticized the BRS for its insincerity towards BCs and credited Rahul Gandhi for initiating the caste census survey.

BC association leaders, including R. Krishnaiah and others, expressed gratitude to CM Revanth Reddy, Deputy CM Bhatti Vikramarka, and Minister Ponnam Prabhakar, calling the move historic. They emphasized that caste-based reservations in Telangana would set a national precedent and ensure justice for BCs.

BJP Appoints District Presidents for Four More Districts in Telangana

**TPN Correspondent
Telangana, Feb 14**
The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has appointed district presidents for four more districts in Telangana, continuing its organizational restructuring in the state. The newly appointed district presidents are:

- Yadadri Bhuvanagiri – Ashok Goud
- Sangareddy – Godavari Anji Reddy
- Mahabubabad – Venkateswarlu
- Golkonda Gosha Mahal – Uma Mahendra

With these appointments, BJP has now announced district presidents for 23 districts, including the 19 previously announced. The party has a total of 38 organizational districts in Telangana, and appointments are yet to be made for 15 more districts. The BJP is actively strengthening its leadership at the district level ahead of upcoming political challenges in the state. The party aims to expand its presence and improve coordination across all districts. The announcement of the remaining district presidents is expected soon.



Kavitha Adorns Traditional Bangles in Jangaon, Praises Artisans



**TPN Correspondent
Jagruiti, Feb 14**
BRS MLC and Jagruiti convener Kavitha visited a temple in Pembarthi village, Jangaon district, where she was seen wearing bangles adorned with beads. Embracing the local tradition, she joyfully posed with a basket of bangles on her head, appreciating the craftsmanship of Telangana's artisans.

Sharing her experience on social media, Kavitha expressed admiration for the Pusalamma artisans, calling them the "shining stars of the nation" and "symbols

of traditional beauty." She poetically described their skill as a "multi-layered garland of bangles" and celebrated their dedication to preserving Telangana's heritage.

During her visit, she stated, "On the occasion of our Jangaon Pembarthi, our Pusalogala sisters have adorned me with bangles in a unique way... Jayaho Pusalakka, Jayaho BCI!"

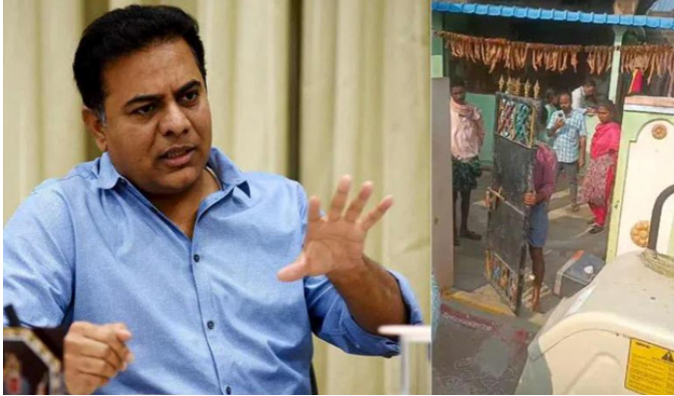
Her visit highlighted the rich cultural traditions of Telangana and reinforced her commitment to promoting local artisans.

KTR Slams Congress Over Farmer's Loan Repayment Incident

**TPN Correspondent
Hyderabad, Feb 14**
BRS Working President K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) expressed outrage over an incident in Edunutala village, Kodakandla mandal, Jangaon district, where bank officials reportedly removed a farmer's house gate due to non-repayment of a loan taken for buffaloes. KTR condemned the act, questioning, "Is this the price for failing to repay a loan?" He recalled similar incidents under the previous Congress regime, where farmers' homes were stripped of essential items, and even students' books were locked away. He accused the Congress govern-

ment of reviving past injustices. Taking a dig at Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, KTR asked whether bank officials had the courage to take similar action against him for failing to fulfill his promise of waiving ₹2 lakh in farm loans. He questioned, "Is there one rule for poor farmers and another for those in power?"

Warning the Congress leadership, KTR asserted that "farmers are watching everything and will not remain silent." He cautioned that the ruling party would face backlash from the farming community, hinting at resistance against Congress leaders in rural areas.



Tension in Mahabubabad: Villagers Protest Against Highway Survey



**TPN Correspondent
Mahabubabad, Feb 14**
Tension escalated in Mahabubabad district as villagers obstructed revenue officials conducting a survey for the construction of the Valigonda to Bhadrachalam (P-930) national highway at Salar Thanda, a suburb of Mahabubabad town.

The villagers, fearing the loss of their lands, strongly opposed the survey, surrounding the officials and warning them against proceeding. They expressed concerns that the road construction would displace them and impact their livelihoods.

Amidst the protest, revenue officials continued their work under heavy police protection to prevent any untoward incidents. Authorities are yet to respond to the villagers' demands, but the situation remains tense as local residents stand firm in their opposition to the project.

Harish Rao Slams CM Revanth Reddy Over Drinking Water Shortage

**TPN Correspondent
Telangana, Feb 14**
Former BRS minister T. Harish Rao has criticized Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for failing to address the drinking water crisis in the state. Sharing a video on X, Harish Rao highlighted the plight of people in Kodangal and Tekul Code villages, who are protesting with empty bottles due to the lack of Mission Bhagiratha water. He questioned how the government plans to tackle the crisis if such shortages arise at the beginning of summer. Harish Rao also demanded that while the government is making cuts in welfare schemes, it should at least ensure adequate drinking water supply. Harish Rao, who has been vocal about public grievances, recently raised concerns over pending salaries of Home Guards, demolition of Gandipet Kali Mandir, farmer loan waivers, and caste census. His continued attacks on the Congress government suggest that he may soon embark on a padayatra to take these issues directly to the people.



Strict Election Code for Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Teacher MLC Polls

**TPN Correspondent
Telangana, Feb 14**
District Collector and Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Teacher MLC Election Returning Officer Tripathi emphasized that all candidates must strictly adhere to the election code of conduct.

During a meeting held after the withdrawal of nominations at the District Collector's office, she informed candidates and their agents that campaigning during school hours is prohibited. Permissions for election-related activities should be obtained from



respective District Election Officers and Assistant Returning Officers, while constituency-wide permissions must be secured through Nalgonda RO. Vehicle and rally permissions should be sought in respective districts.

Candidates were instructed to promptly submit polling and counting agent details along with photos for identity cards. As per the voter list published on the 10th, the constituency has 25,797 voters. A strong room and counting center are being estab-

lished at Arjala Bhav, Nalgonda.

District SP Saratchandra Pawar assured tight security, including a three-tier system with CCTV surveillance. Candidates must obtain prior approval for rallies, meetings, and canvassing vehicles. Licensed weapons must be deposited in advance, and loudspeakers will only be allowed between 6 AM and 10 PM. Additional Collector J. Srinivas explained the election rules, stressing that violations would lead to action. 25 counting tables will be set up, with each candidate allowed one agent per table.

Tension in Rangareddy District Court: Convict Throws Slippers at Judge

**TPN Correspondent
Rangareddy Dist, Feb 14**
A shocking incident unfolded at Rangareddy District Court in NTR Nagar, where a convict sentenced to life imprisonment threw slippers at the judge in a fit of rage. The accused, unable to accept the court's verdict in a POCSO case, acted aggressively, creating tension in the courtroom. Eyewitnesses reported that as soon as the judgment was pronounced, the accused suddenly removed his slippers and hurled them at the judge. The incident caused panic among those present. Reacting swiftly, lawyers in the courtroom restrained the

convict, beat him up, and handed him over to the police. Following the attack, security at the court has been tightened. Legal experts noted that such behavior not only disrespects the judiciary but could also lead to additional legal consequences for the convict.

This incident highlights a disturbing trend of accused individuals displaying defiance in courts, further complicating their legal battles. Authorities have assured strict action against such misconduct to uphold the dignity of the judicial system.

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 showcase 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 financial 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,



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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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

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:

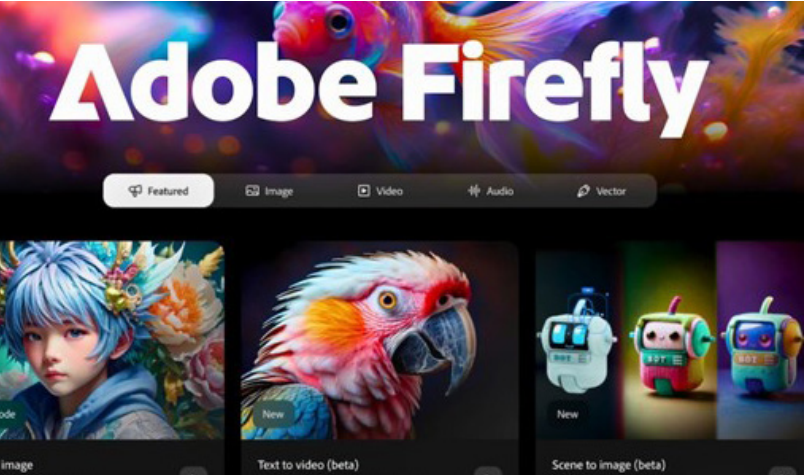
"Honda proposed changing the structure from establishing a joint holding company... to a structure where Honda would be the parent company and Nissan the subsidiary

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 Specifica-



tions 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.

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.

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.

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 Dhami Reviews Preparations for Amit Shah's National Games Visit

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami 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 Dhami's active involvement underscores the significance of the Games for Uttarakhand. On February 12, Dhami attended wrestling events in Haridwar and participated in the 'Mauli Samvad' National Sports Vision Conclave 2025. He also played hockey with



participants. Additionally, CM Dhami 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.

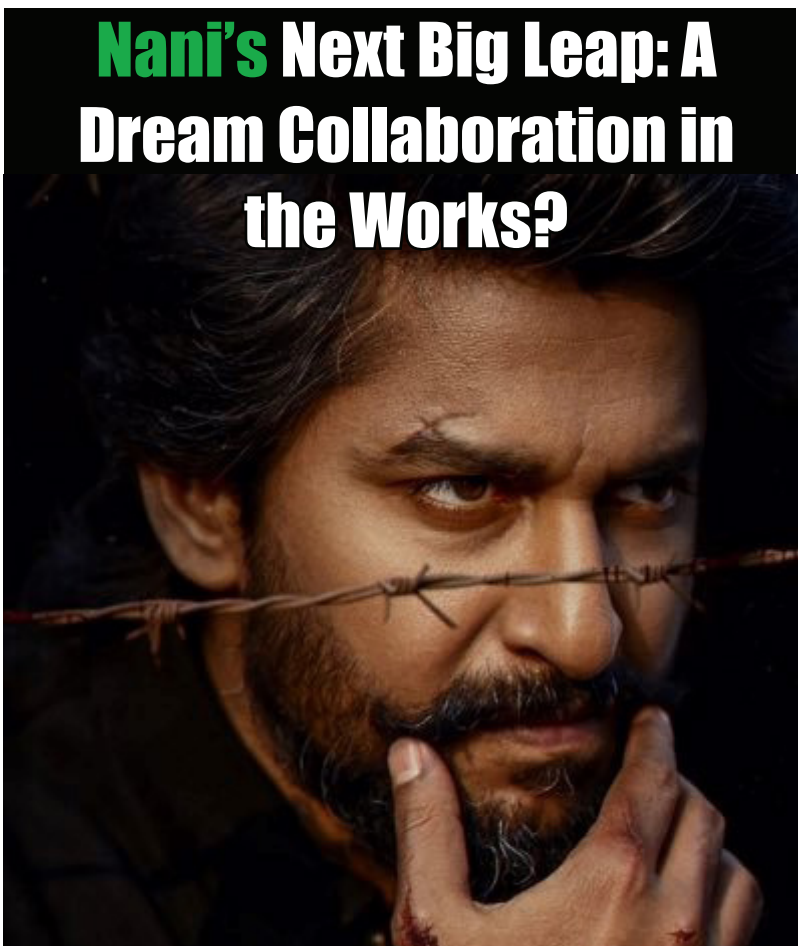
Indian Women's Hockey Team Gears Up for FIH Pro League

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.



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.



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?