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Rekha Gupta Will Work For Delhi's Development With Full Vigour: PM Modi

Rekha Gupta Sworn In As Delhi Chief Minister With PM Modi & NDA Allies



PM Modi congratulates Rekha Gupta

BJP returns to power in Delhi after 26 years

Gupta rises from grassroots to top leadership

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended his congratulations to Rekha Gupta on Thursday after she took the oath as the new Chief Minister of Delhi, expressing confidence in her leadership and dedica-

tion to the city's development.

Gupta, a first-time BJP MLA, took office in a grand ceremony, marking the party's return to power in Delhi after a hiatus of over 26 years. In his congratulatory message following the swearing-in ceremony, PM Modi praised Gupta's journey, noting that she has risen from the grassroots level through her active involvement in campus politics, state organization, municipal administration, and now as an MLA and Chief Minister.

PM Modi said, "She has risen from the grassroots, being active in campus politics, state organisation, municipal administration and now MLA as well as Chief Minister. I am confident she will work for Delhi's development with full vigour." He

further expressed his best wishes to Gupta for a fruitful tenure, emphasizing his trust in her leadership.

In addition to Rekha Gupta, several other prominent leaders were sworn in as part of the new government, including Parvesh Verma, Ashish Sood, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Kapil Mishra, Ravinder Indraj Singh, and Pankaj Singh, who took their oaths of office in the presence of Delhi's Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena.

The swearing-in ceremony, held at Ramlila Maidan, was attended by a host of senior BJP leaders and allies, marking a significant moment in Delhi's political landscape. The event showcased the BJP's strength as it regains control of the city after more than two decades.

Delhi Assembly Elections: As BJP storms to power in Delhi, what's next for AAP?

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

With the BJP taking control of Delhi on Thursday, the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is closing a significant chapter and stepping into uncharted waters as the Opposition in the national capital. The once-dominant party, which reshaped political engagement with its anti-Congress stance, now faces a fresh challenge: countering a BJP government that has long been a formidable force in Delhi's politics.

While the AAP managed to secure victories in Delhi's Assembly elections, it has never successfully defeated the BJP in the Lok Sabha polls. With corruption allegations and recent electoral setbacks, including the dent in its 'Delhi Model,' AAP's ability to continue with the same campaign strategy is in question. Moreover, the AAP government in Punjab is facing scrutiny over unfulfilled poll promises, further complicating its position.

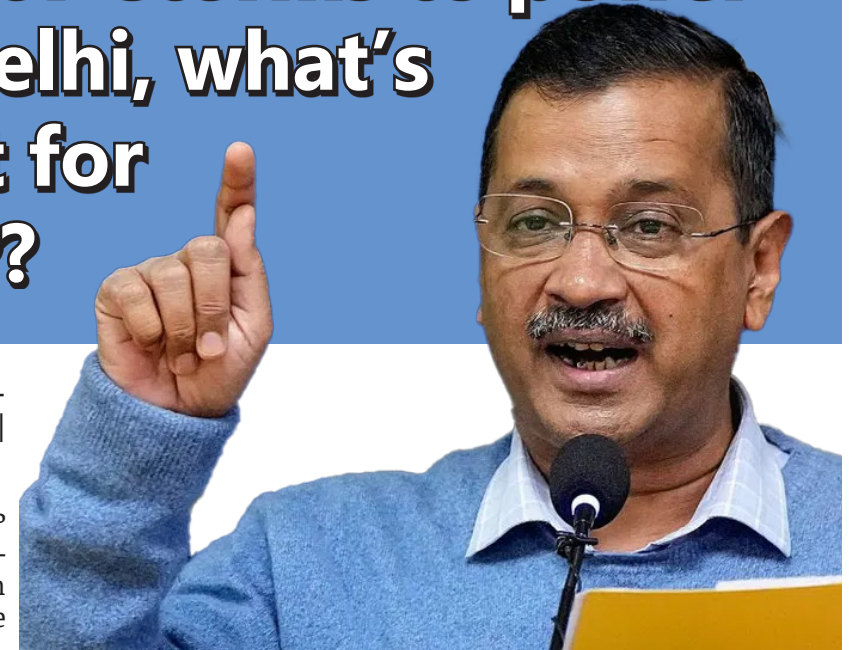
Internally, the party is cautious about launching a full-fledged campaign against the BJP, opting instead to give the new government time to settle in and address governance challenges. AAP sources suggest that aggressive political strategies were unpopular during the recent campaigns, and the party may

avoid adopting a confrontational tone early on.

A key task for AAP will be to reaffirm its ideological foundation as it finds itself caught between an aggressive Hindutva narrative and an unclear stance on minority issues. The party's immediate focus will be on fulfilling its election promises in Punjab, particularly the rollout of a Rs 1,000 monthly allowance for women. The BJP and Congress have both raised this issue, putting pressure on AAP to deliver.

Retaining its stronghold in Punjab is critical for AAP, as a defeat in the state in 2027 could spell trouble for its position in Delhi. The Congress, sensing an opportunity, is ramping up its efforts in the border state, aiming to reclaim its lost ground.

In Delhi, the idea of an alliance with Congress is off the table after the failed attempt in the Lok Sabha elections, where vote transfer did not occur. With the middle-class vote shifting away from AAP, the party faces significant challenges as it reorients itself for the future.



Will make Delhi world's 'most beautiful capital': Parvesh vows to fulfil manifesto promises

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

BJP leader and New Delhi MLA, Parvesh Verma, on Thursday expressed his commitment to fulfilling the responsibility entrusted to him by the party and vowed to remain a disciplined worker of the BJP. Speaking after the BJP's return to power in Delhi with a commanding mandate of 48 seats, Verma acknowledged the party's significant responsibility towards the citizens of Delhi.

"The people of Delhi have given us their love and blessings. After more than 26 years, the BJP is forming the government here. I especially thank our Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership, and I assure the citizens of Delhi that under his guidance, we will make this the most beautiful capital in the world," Verma stated.

He also expressed his gratitude to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP national president JP Nadda for their leadership, noting that their guidance had played a crucial role in the BJP's success in the capital.

Verma emphasized the party's promise to deliver on its manifesto, particularly in transforming Del-

hi into a "viksit" (developed) city. "Today is a very important day, and we will fulfill all the promises made to the people of Delhi," he added, thanking the party workers whose tireless efforts contributed to the party's victory.



When asked about the possibility of him becoming the deputy chief minister, Verma remained focused on his role as a disciplined BJP worker. "I have been saying this for long: I am a very disciplined worker of the BJP and will remain in the party till my last breath. The BJP made my father Chief Minister of Delhi and a Union Minister, and he served the party till his last breath. I will do the same," Verma declared.

Rekha Gupta, BJP's MLA from Shalimar Bagh, was appointed as the Leader of the House in the Delhi Assembly on Wednesday. Gupta, 50, took her oath as the new Chief Minister at a ceremony held at Ramlila Maidan on Thursday. Her appointment marks her as the second woman Chief Minister for the BJP and the fourth woman to hold the position in Delhi.

The BJP's victory ends the decade-long reign of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led by Arvind Kejriwal, marking a historic political shift in Delhi.

BJP's Vijender Gupta To Be Delhi Assembly Speaker

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta has been nominated by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as its candidate for the position of Speaker in the Delhi Assembly, party leaders confirmed on Thursday. Gupta, a third-term legislator, is set to contest the position of Speaker following his party's nomination.

Upon his nomination, Gupta expressed his intention to prioritize the tabling of the pending reports from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) that had been withheld by the previous AAP-led government. Speaking to PTI, he said, "I will first of all get the CAG reports that were kept pending by the previous AAP government tabled before the House."

Gupta, along with other BJP MLAs, had earlier approached the court, alleging that the AAP government had obstructed the tabling of 14 CAG reports on its performance in the Delhi Assembly. This move had been a point of contention between the ruling AAP and the opposition BJP in the past.

The newly constituted 8th Delhi Assembly has 48 BJP MLAs, while the opposition AAP holds 22 seats. The Speaker of the Assembly is elected by the members of the House, and the BJP's nomination of Gupta signifies its attempt to secure this crucial position.



The Speaker's role is pivotal in maintaining the order and decorum of the Assembly, ensuring smooth functioning during legislative proceedings. Gupta's candidacy reflects the BJP's determination to assert its influence in the Assembly and address issues it believes were left unresolved by the previous government. If elected, Gupta's first major action will be to address the backlog of CAG reports, a move that is likely to have significant political implications for the Delhi government and its accountability measures.

The election of the Speaker will take place soon, and the nomination of Gupta underscores the ongoing political dynamics in the Delhi Assembly.

Jaishankar heads to South Africa amid US, Russia talks on Ukraine war

TPN Correspondent| Delhi

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will be traveling to Johannesburg, South Africa, for the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting on February 20-21, as global geopolitics continue to evolve in light of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. Jaishankar's visit holds significant importance as it comes at a time when the United States and Russia are engaging in their most extensive high-level talks to bring an end to the near three-year-long conflict in Ukraine.



The G20 meeting will offer a platform for critical discussions on international issues, including the ongoing war, global security, and economic concerns. Jaishankar's presence at the meeting reflects India's growing influence in shaping diplomatic dialogue, especially in matters involving major world powers.

The visit takes on additional context following the decision by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio to skip the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting. Rubio publicly criticized the agenda, calling it "anti-American." He specifically pointed out South Africa's focus on issues such as "sol-

idity, equality, and sustainability" – with an emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and climate change. Rubio voiced his opinion that his role was to promote America's national interests, not engage in discussions perceived as counter to US priorities.

Jaishankar's attendance at the meeting comes as the global balance of power is in flux, with shifting alliances and foreign policies playing a critical role in resolving international conflicts. India's stance on global cooperation and diplomatic solutions will likely be under the spotlight as discussions unfold, particularly with regards to the situation in Ukraine and broader international stability.

"Visionary": Sadhguru Praises Gautam Adani's Rs 10,000 Crore Donation Pledge

TPN Correspondent| Delhi

Spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev has lauded Gautam Adani, the Chairman of Adani Group, for his philanthropic commitment to donate Rs 10,000 crore towards social causes. Calling it a "visionary initiative," Sadhguru expressed that this move could transform India into a global beacon of well-being.



In a post on X, Sadhguru emphasized, "Investing in creating 1.4 billion healthy, inspired, educated Bharatiyas can transform the nation into a beacon of wellbeing for the world. Congratulations to Gautam Adani on this visionary initiative." His words underline the potential impact of Adani's donation, which aims to address critical social issues and uplift society.

Adani made this significant donation commitment during the wedding of his youngest son, Jeet Adani, earlier this month. As part of the ceremony, he pledged Rs 10,000 crores for social causes. The majority of this donation will be allocated towards large-scale infrastructure projects in key areas such as healthcare, education, and skill development. These projects are expected to provide access to affordable, world-class hospitals, medical colleges, K-12 schools, and global skill academies with guaranteed employability opportunities.

Sources close to Adani revealed that his donation

aligns with his social philosophy of "seva sadhana hai, seva prarthna hai aur seva parmatma hai" (service is the spiritual practice, the prayer, and the connection with the divine). This philosophy is central to his approach to philanthropy and social responsibility.

Jeet Adani's wedding, which took place in Ahmedabad, was described as a "simple and traditional" ceremony. In addition to the large-scale donation, Jeet and his wife Diva Jaimin Shah, the daughter of diamond merchant Jaimin Shah, also pledged to contribute Rs 10 lakh each year to fund the weddings of 500 women with disabilities. Just days before the wedding, Jeet met with 21 newlywed women with disabilities and their husbands to launch this meaningful initiative.

Adani's substantial contribution and these initiatives reflect a strong commitment to making a lasting positive impact on society.

Maha Kumbh: Nirmala Sitharaman, Other BJP Leaders Take Holy Dip At Sangam

TPN Correspondent| Prayagraj

Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia on Wednesday lashed out at the BJP, blaming the party for the deteriorating law and order situation in Delhi. Sisodia cited the recent sexual assault of a minor girl in Tilak Nagar to highlight the growing concerns over crime and safety in the city.



Addressing the media, the former Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi condemned the BJP for its handling of law and order, pointing out that crimes against women have been on the rise. He argued that perpetrators of such crimes were no longer afraid of the law, as they knew they could

act with impunity.

"I want to say to the BJP that the elections are over, and now it is time for them to focus on the law and order situation in Delhi, which has completely collapsed," Sisodia remarked during a press conference. He emphasized the urgent need for the BJP to prioritize the safety of residents instead of continuing to focus on personal attacks against Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

Sisodia further alleged that criminals felt emboldened because the BJP's leadership had shifted its focus from

addressing crucial issues like crime and security to engaging in political mudslinging. He criticized the party for its apparent lack of concern for the safety and well-being of the people of Delhi.

The remarks came just days after the BJP emerged victorious in the Delhi Assembly elections, defeating AAP, with the new government set to take office during a swearing-in ceremony at Ramllela Maidan on Thursday. Sisodia's statements reflect the ongoing political tensions in the capital, with both parties continuing to exchange barbs over governance and public safety.

Tripura CM Manik Saha Pushes for Vande Bharat Train Between Agartala and Guwahati

TPN Correspondent| Delhi

Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha has requested Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw to introduce a Vande Bharat train connecting the state capital, Agartala, with Guwahati, Assam's capital. The proposal aims to improve connectivity and enhance travel options between the two cities, further promoting regional development.



In a recent meeting with Vaishnaw in New Delhi, Saha highlighted several key railway development projects for the northeastern state. The Chief Minister emphasized the importance of establishing a Vande Bharat train on the Agartala-Guwahati route and discussed the introduction of additional rail services for the region. This includes a local train service between Dharmanagar and Sabroom, a new track between Jirania and Bodhjungnagar (industrial estate), and a rail link between Dharmanagar and Kailashar. Additionally, Saha suggested a "Kishan Rail" between Agartala and Guwahati to cater to agricultural transport needs.

Saha shared the details of the meeting on his Facebook page, expressing his commitment to improving Tripura's rail infrastructure and transportation options. He also noted that the development of the railway

network would provide better accessibility, ease of travel, and foster economic growth in the region.

In his visit to New Delhi, Saha also met Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to discuss various educational developments in Tripura. Among the topics discussed were the establishment of Vidya Jyoti Schools, upgrading Women's College to a Women's University, and elevating the Tripura Institute of Technology to a Technical University.

Saha's efforts to advance Tripura's infrastructure, both in education and transportation, reflect the state government's focus on enhancing regional development. The introduction of a Vande Bharat train could significantly improve connectivity and provide a modern, high-speed option for travelers in the northeast.

Very Disturbing: Supreme Court On Lokpal Order Against High Court Judge

TPN Correspondent| Delhi

The Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the Lokpal's order that had entertained complaints against a high court judge, labeling the move as "very disturbing." A special bench led by Justice BR Gavai issued a notice to the Centre and other parties, requesting responses regarding the suo motu proceedings initiated over the Lokpal's January 27 order.



The bench, which also included Justices Surya Kant and Abhay S Oka, prohibited the complainant from revealing the identity of the judge in question. The court directed that the complaint filed by the individual remain confidential.

The Lokpal's order had been issued in response to two complaints filed against an additional judge of the high court, accusing him of influencing an additional district judge and another judge within the same court. The allegations claimed that the judges acted to favor a private company in a suit that had been filed against the complainant. The private company, according to reports, had previously been a client of the high court judge when he was practicing as an advocate at the Bar.

The Supreme Court's decision to stay the Lokpal's

order comes after concerns over the potential implications for judicial independence and the nature of the allegations. The Court has sought to address the procedural aspects of the complaint while safeguarding the privacy of the individuals involved and the confidentiality of sensitive information.

The case has raised important questions about the mechanisms available to address judicial misconduct and the balance between transparency and protecting the integrity of the judicial system. The proceedings will continue as the Court reviews the matter further, with a focus on ensuring that justice is served without compromising the core values of judicial independence.

'Hope she meets all expectations': Swati Maliwal congratulates Delhi CM Rekha Gupta

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

On Thursday, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal attended the oath-taking ceremony of Delhi's newly appointed Chief Minister Rekha Gupta at Ramlila Maidan, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other top BJP and NDA leaders were also present.



- Swati Maliwal Attends Rekha Gupta's Oath-Taking
- highlights public expectations from new leadership
- Her presence signals a complex political stance

Maliwal, who has been a significant figure in Delhi politics, was spotted at the event alongside Devender Yadav, President of the Delhi Pradesh Congress. This sighting comes amidst her ongoing feud with AAP's leadership, particularly the party's chief, Arvind Kejriwal, who had nominated her to the Rajya Sabha in the past.

Speaking at the ceremony, Maliwal extended her greetings to Rekha Gupta, acknowledging the significant expectations placed on her by the people of Delhi. "My greetings to Delhi CM Rekha Gupta... The people of Delhi have chosen her with great expectations. I hope she meets those expectations..." Maliwal remarked, highlighting the hopes of Delhi residents for effective governance and leadership.

Maliwal had earlier congratulated

Rekha Gupta after she was named Delhi's new CM on Wednesday, despite her history of strong criticism against AAP and Kejriwal. During the Assembly elections, Maliwal voiced her concerns over issues such as the pollution in the Yamuna River, a major environmental concern for Delhi residents. She even went as far as to collect polluted river water and protested against former Chief Minister Kejriwal, joined by a group of Purvanchali women.

Maliwal's participation in the ceremony and her words of encouragement to Gupta reflect a delicate political stance. While she has criticized AAP's

leadership in the past, her attendance at Gupta's swearing-in indicates a willingness to engage with Delhi's evolving political landscape. Whether this marks the beginning of a change in her relationship with AAP remains to be seen, but her presence at such a significant event speaks volumes about her ongoing political journey and her future role in Delhi politics.

As Delhi looks ahead to new leadership under Rekha Gupta, Maliwal's comments suggest that the expectations for change and progress are high, and the coming months will be crucial in shaping the city's political and social future.

22% For Development, 13% For Education In UP's Rs 8.09 Lakh Crore Budget



TPN Correspondent | UP

Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna presented an Rs 8,08,736-crore Budget for the financial year 2025-26 in the state assembly on Thursday, emphasizing investments in research and development (R&D) and Information Technology (IT).

Khanna highlighted that approximately 22% of the Budget has been allocated for development purposes, 13% for education, 11% for agriculture, and 6% for health. He pointed out that the Budget aims to further boost the state's technological capabilities, with significant provisions for R&D and IT sectors.

The Finance Minister opened

his speech by praising Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for his leadership and acknowledging the state's ongoing progress. He also referenced the ongoing Maha Kumbh, calling it a major cultural and religious event that symbolizes India's ancient faith and cultural unity.

Khanna informed the assembly that the total Budget outlay for FY 2025-26 is 9.8% higher than the previous year's Budget of Rs 7,36,437 crore, which included new schemes worth Rs 24,863 crore.

The Budget includes plans for an Artificial Intelligence City and a technological research park focused on cybersecurity. Provisions were also made for modernizing the Legislative

Assembly and enhancing educational infrastructure, including the development of smart classes and laboratories in schools and polytechnics.

Further, Khanna announced a Rs 145 crore initiative to develop 58 municipal bodies as ideal smart municipal bodies, with Rs 2.50 crore allocated per body. Additionally, the state government plans to improve facilities for construction workers, including the establishment of labor camps at district headquarters.

Khanna also mentioned the 'Zero Poverty Abhiyan,' a campaign launched in October 2024 aimed at uplifting the poorest families by addressing their basic needs and increasing their annual income to Rs 1,25,000.

The Finance Minister outlined Uttar Pradesh's improved financial health, noting that the state has been recognized as a "front-runner state" by NITI Aayog. He also highlighted the state's economic growth, with the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) expected to reach Rs 27.51 lakh crore in FY 2024-25 and per capita income significantly increasing over the years.

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat Inaugurates 'Keshav Kunj' Headquarters in New Delhi

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat emphasized the symbolic importance of the newly renovated 'Keshav Kunj' headquarters in New Delhi, stating that the grandeur of the building should reflect the organization's commitment to its ideals and the transformative work it does. Bhagwat highlighted the significance of the building's design, pointing out that it should be a representation of the Sangh's essence and the magnitude of its work.

Speaking at the Pravesh Utsav program, Bhagwat cautioned the gathering that while circumstances may evolve, the RSS's core direction and values must remain unchanged. He stressed the need for the organization to stay true to its mission, even in the face of changing times.

The new headquarters, 'Keshav Kunj,' spans 3.75 acres and consists of three 12-story buildings named Sadhna, Preerna, and Archana. The project, which cost around Rs 150 crore, is the result of contri-



butions from over 75,000 supporters of Hindutva ideology. The construction began in 2016 with Bhagwat laying the foundation stone, although delays pushed back the completion.

Each of the three towers in the complex houses offices and rooms, with a total of 300 rooms across the buildings. The complex also features state-of-the-art facilities, including 13 elevators, with a service elevator in each tower. The design of the building was conceptualized by Gujarat-based architect Anoop Dave.

One notable feature of the headquarters is the 'Sangh

Sthan,' a large open space between the second and third towers, where a statue of RSS founder Keshav Baliram Hedgewar has been installed. Additionally, a large auditorium named after Ashok Singhal, a key figure in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, is located within the complex.

The building also houses a library, a health clinic, and a sewage treatment plant, and is designed to be energy-efficient with solar power. The offices of RSS-affiliated publications, such as 'Panchjanya', 'Organiser', and Suruchi Publications, will be situated within the complex.

Akhilesh Yadav Alleges Conspiracy to Conceal Pollution Concerns at Triveni Sangam



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday raised concerns about a purported conspiracy to hide the truth about pollution at the Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj, where millions are taking dips during the ongoing MahaKumbh. His remarks came a day after Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath dismissed reports about faecal contamination in the waters of the holy site.

Yadav took to his social media platform, X, to highlight a report by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) submitted to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), which revealed that the river water quality at various locations in Prayagraj did not meet the required bath-

ing standards during monitoring on January 12-13, 2025. According to the CPCB, the waters were contaminated with sewage, raising alarms about the potential health risks for devotees.

In his post, Yadav pointed out the contradiction between the findings of the CPCB report and the state government's response. "This news came to light when the CPCB told the National Green Tribunal that the water of Ganga ji in Prayagraj is 'contaminated with sewage'. In Lucknow, on the floor of the House, this report was refuted as false, and it was said that everything is 'under control,'" Yadav wrote. He suggested that there might be an attempt to conceal the severity of the contamination

and downplay the risks posed to devotees participating in the religious event.

The issue of water quality at the Triveni Sangam has raised concerns among environmentalists and health experts, particularly given the large number of people taking part in the ritualistic bath. Yadav's comments have added fuel to the ongoing debate about the government's handling of the situation and whether the public is being adequately informed about the potential hazards in the waters.

As the MahaKumbh continues, the controversy over water quality and pollution remains a point of contention between the ruling government and opposition leaders.

BJP government 'only promoting capitalists' amid significant inflation: Rahul Gandhi

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday accused the BJP-led government at the Centre of diverting attention from critical issues and favoring capitalists over the common people. Speaking during his two-day visit to his Parliamentary constituency, Gandhi visited the Hanuman temple at Churuva border before heading to Bachhrawan.

At Bachhrawan, the former Congress

president addressed a conference of party workers, urging them to focus on strengthening the party's presence at the grassroots level, particularly at the booth level. Gandhi used the opportunity to criticize the government's economic policies, stating, "Inflation has risen significantly, and the BJP government is only promoting capitalists."

Gandhi's visit to Raebareli, which included visits to local temples and engagement with party workers, aimed

to energize Congress supporters and bolster their political efforts. His statements focused on issues of in-



flation and the economic difficulties faced by ordinary citizens, which he claimed were being ignored by the government.

Meanwhile, some BJP workers in the area claimed that they were placed under house arrest during Gandhi's visit. BJP mandal president Pravesh Verma alleged that he, along with 25 other party workers, had been confined to the Nagar Panchayat office. Verma further criticized Gandhi for not focusing on the public's issues

and instead, spending his time on political rhetoric. "It is the MP's responsibility to stay here, listen to the problems of the people, and resolve them because the people of Raebareli elected him as their representative," Verma said. However, no confirmation was received from the police regarding the claims of house arrest.

As the political tension continues, both parties remain focused on their respective narratives in the lead-up to the next elections.

Delhi women to get Rs 2,500 monthly aid by March 8: CM Rekha Gupta



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Delhi's Chief Minister-designate, Rekha Gupta, reaffirmed her government's commitment to providing Rs 2,500 monthly financial aid to women in the capital, assuring that the first installment would be credited by March 8, marking International Women's Day. Gupta, who is set to take oath as Delhi's fourth woman CM, emphasized the importance of fulfilling the promises made during the election campaign.

Before the grand ceremony at Ramlila Maidan later in the day, Gupta visited the Shri Marghat Wale Hanuman temple in Kashmiri Gate, reflecting on her deep connection to the city's culture and traditions. As part of her ad-

dress, she assured women that they would begin receiving the promised financial support by the designated date, expressing her firm resolve to follow through on her commitments.

In her speech, Gupta took a swipe at the previous Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, criticizing its record of financial transparency. She asserted that the AAP administration would be held accountable for every penny spent during its tenure, underscoring her intention to restore fiscal discipline and efficiency in governance.

Highlighting the significance of the aid program, Gupta stated, "It is our responsibility to implement PM Narendra Modi's vision for Delhi. Women will receive finan-

cial aid in their accounts by March 8." The promise of Rs 2,500 per month to women by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) outmatches the AAP's pre-poll commitment of Rs 2,100 per month, reflecting the BJP's focus on empowering women in the region.

The BJP, which secured a resounding victory in the Delhi Assembly elections by winning 48 out of 70 seats, is moving swiftly to establish its new government. According to a recent notification from the Union Home Ministry, BJP MLAs Parvesh Sahib and other key members are set to take prominent roles in the upcoming cabinet, reinforcing the party's goal of making tangible progress on its electoral promises.

- Rekha Gupta pledges ₹2,500 aid for women
- Promises fiscal transparency, criticizes AAP governance
- BJP swiftly forming government after major electoral win

Over 25,000 Security Personnel Deployed For Delhi CM's Oath Ceremony

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Ahead of the much-anticipated oath-taking ceremony for Delhi's new Chief Minister at Ramlila Maidan on Thursday, over 25,000 security personnel and more than 15 companies of paramilitary forces have been deployed to ensure a secure event, a senior police officer confirmed. The event is expected to be attended by key political figures, including chief ministers from BJP-led states.

To maintain order and security, the police have made "robust" arrangements. Over 5,000 police and paramilitary personnel are stationed around Ramlila Maidan, with additional deployment at more than 2,500 strategic points throughout the area. The security force has been meticulously organized to prevent any disruptions and to protect those attending the ceremony.

Rekha Gupta, a first-time MLA, will take the oath as Delhi's new Chief Minister, marking a historic moment after the BJP's return to power following a 26-year hiatus. The BJP's victory ends the 10-year rule of the AAP led by Arvind Kejriw-



al. Gupta was named Leader of the House during the BJP legislature party meeting late on Wednesday. She later met with Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena to formally stake her claim to form the new government.

In preparation for the event, only authorized personnel will be allowed near Ramlila Maidan, and a detailed traffic plan has been set up to manage the flow of attendees and vehicles. The police have also put in place additional safety measures, including multiple layers of barricades and emergency response teams to ensure the security of dignitaries.

Approximately 50,000 attendees are expected, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Cabinet ministers, and chief ministers from states governed by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). To ensure the highest level of security, commandos, quick response teams, and SWAT units are stationed at strategic locations. Snipers have been placed at high-rise buildings nearby, while AI-powered facial recognition CCTV cameras monitor every corner of the venue.

With extensive security measures in place, authorities are committed to maintaining a smooth and safe ceremony for all involved.

Delhi station stampede: Examine passenger limits and platform ticket sale, HC Tells railway

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Delhi High Court raised concerns over the sale of excess tickets beyond the capacity of train coaches during a hearing regarding a recent stampede incident at New Delhi railway station. A bench led by Chief Justice D K Upadhyay and Justice Tushar Rao Gedela expressed frustration, questioning why the number of tickets sold exceeded the passenger capacity if the railway authorities have fixed limits for each coach.

The court was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) that sought the implementation of existing provisions of the Railway Act, specifically sections 57 and 147, which deal with overcrowding. The PIL claimed that adherence to these laws could have potentially prevented the tragic stampede incident.

The bench highlighted that the Railways had failed to implement a key provision of the Railway Act—Section 57—which mandates that the maximum number of passengers allowed in each coach must be fixed. "If you fix the

number of passengers to be accommodated in a coach, then why does the number of tickets sold exceed that number? That's the problem," the court stated, indicating a failure in the system that leads to overcrowding.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Railways, assured the court that the Railways was committed to following the law and promised that the issues raised in the PIL would be examined at the highest level. "There is an 'unprecedented' situation, but we will look into the lacunae and take necessary action," Mehta said.

Additionally, the court pointed out that the Railways' rules require the number of passengers allowed in each coach to be conspicuously displayed outside each compartment. The bench asked the Solicitor General to provide concrete steps on how the Railways would implement these regulations to prevent overcrowding and penalize unauthorized passengers.

The court has asked the Railways to file an affidavit detailing the measures being implemented to address the overcrowding issue, emphasizing the importance of ensuring public safety in railway travel.



Delhi HC Disposes Plea Against Bail Granted to Sajjan Kumar in 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots Case



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The Delhi High Court on Thursday disposed of a petition challenging the bail granted to former Congress leader Sajjan Kumar in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots case, after learning that he had already been convicted. Justice Vikas Mahajan dismissed the plea as "infructuous" following a submission from the Central government's standing counsel, who informed the court that Kumar had been convicted in the case and taken into custody.

Kumar was convicted on February 12 in relation to the murders of two individuals during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi's Saraswati Vihar area. However, the trial court has yet to decide on his sentence.

Sajjan Kumar is already serving a life sentence for his involvement in another murder case related to the 1984 riots that occurred after the assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) had previously challenged Kumar's bail, which was granted by the trial court on April 27, 2022. The SIT sought to have this bail order overturned, and the High Court had stayed the bail order on July 4, 2022, while issuing a notice to Kumar for his response.

With the conviction now in place, the petition challenging his bail has been rendered moot, leading the High Court to dispose of the case.

Govt Extends Chief Economic Adviser Nageswaran's Tenure Until 2027

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

The government has announced an extension of the tenure of Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran until March 31, 2027. The Ministry of Finance issued the notification on Thursday, following the approval of the Prime Minister-led Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, which includes the Prime Minister and the Home Minister as members.

According to the official notification, Nageswaran will continue in his position on a contract basis until March 31, 2027, or until further orders are issued, whichever comes earlier. This extension solidifies Nageswaran's role in shaping India's economic policies and advising the government on key financial matters.

V Anantha Nageswaran, a renowned economist, assumed the role of Chief Economic Adviser in 2022. Over the course of his tenure, he has been instrumental in offering guidance on macroeconomic issues, fiscal policies, and overall economic strategies. His work has gained attention



for its emphasis on enhancing India's economic growth and managing challenges arising from global economic dynamics.

The extension of Nageswaran's tenure reflects the government's confidence in his leadership and expertise in navigating the country's economic policies. With this extension, Nageswaran will continue to play a crucial role in advising the government on matters related to India's economic development and the management of financial resources.

The government's decision to extend his tenure also indicates a focus on maintaining continuity in economic planning and policy-making at a time when India is seeking to strengthen its position in the global economy.

Not Driving Again: Omar Abdullah After Delhi Metro Ride



- Omar Abdullah praises Delhi Metro for convenience
- Promotes Jammu & Kashmir tourism at SATTE 2025
- India's first vertical bi-facial solar plant launched

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah recently shared his experience of traveling on the Delhi Metro Airport Express Line, declaring that he will no longer drive to Yashbhumi for events. In a post on X, Abdullah said, "Today I took the @OfficialDMRC Airport Express to get to Yashbhumi for the SATTE 2025 tourism promotion event. Twenty-five minutes in the train beats 1.5 hours in the car hands down and saves fuel & emissions. I'm not driving to Yashbhumi again."

This praise for the metro system was not a one-time occurrence. Back in 2018, Abdullah had called the Airport Express a "world-class piece of infrastructure" and lauded it as the "best way to get to Terminal 3."

As the Guest of Honour at the SATTE 2025 event, South Asia's premier travel and tourism exchange, Abdullah highlighted Jammu and Kashmir as an ideal destination for a variety of tourism sectors, including

pilgrimage, weddings, adventure sports, and peaceful retreats. He quoted the famous Persian couplet by Amir Khusrau, "If there is a paradise on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here," referencing the natural beauty of Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated India's first vertical bi-facial solar plant at the Okhla Vihar Metro station on Tuesday. The 50 KW solar plant is designed to capture sunlight from both sides, enhancing sustainability by maximizing energy efficiency without requiring additional land space. The setup is part of an ongoing effort to reduce the environmental impact of urban transit systems. Additionally, a 1 MW rooftop solar plant was launched at the Khyber Pass depot.

Khattar emphasized the importance of balancing progress with environmental responsibility, stating, "The path forward is clear: balance progress with environmental responsibility, ensuring a cleaner, healthier world for future generations."

Maha Kumbh: Nirmala Sitharaman, Other BJP Leaders Take Holy Dip At Sangam



TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj

On Wednesday, several prominent political leaders, including Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, BJP MP Tejasvi Surya, and Union Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, visited the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj and took a holy dip at the Sangam, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers. The leaders expressed their profound appreciation for the historic and spiritual significance of the event.

Accompanied by her family, Nirmala

Sitharaman described the experience as a "profound moment" in the Sanatan tradition, highlighting the deep spiritual connection felt during the holy dip, according to an official statement.

Tejasvi Surya, BJP MP from Bangalore South and president of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM), also participated in the ritual along with hundreds of BJYM workers. He emphasized the global significance of the Maha Kumbh, stating, "No event of this scale has ever been organized anywhere in the world. The greatest aspect of Maha

Kumbh is its spirit of unity, bringing together people from across the country and beyond."

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, who also visited the site, expressed his awe at the continuity of the tradition. "This tradition has continued for generations. I feel fortunate to have witnessed and participated in the Maha Kumbh in my lifetime. The energy and positivity here are incredible," he said, reflecting on the spiritual power of the event.

Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Shinde also shared his feelings of gratitude for being part of this extraordinary event. "Maha Kumbh comes once in 144 years, and I consider myself lucky to attend it. Crores of people are here to take a holy bath, making this a truly magnificent spiritual confluence," he added, acknowledging the immense turnout and significance of the occasion.

The Maha Kumbh, a unique and awe-inspiring event, continues to draw people from all walks of life, symbolizing unity and spiritual renewal.

Indian deportees from US arrive in Panama; Embassy says safe and secure at a hotel

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

India has been informed by Panama about the safe arrival of a group of Indians who were deported from the United States. The Embassy of India in Panama, covering Costa Rica and Nicaragua, shared the update on Thursday, confirming the arrival but withholding the exact number of Indians involved.

The group of deported Indians is part of a larger batch of 299 migrants sent to Panama by the US government. These individuals arrived on three separate flights last week, after President Jose Raul Mulino of Panama agreed to designate the country as a "bridge" for deportees, allowing them to transit before they continue their journey back



to India or elsewhere.

The deportations are part of the broader measures under the Trump administration's efforts to enforce stricter immigration policies, including the deportation of millions of people who entered the United States illegally.

The Embassy of India in Panama has since taken necessary steps to ensure

the safety and wellbeing of the deported individuals. The mission has obtained consular access to the group and is working closely with the Panamanian government to assist them further. As part of the process, the Indian mission is monitoring their situation, ensuring they are provided with adequate support as per the country's protocols for deported migrants.

This development comes amidst ongoing challenges related to the treatment and repatriation of individuals deported from the US. The Indian government is continuing its efforts to facilitate the safe return of its citizens while providing consular assistance to those affected by immigration policies.

Sri Lankan Navy Arrests 10 Tamil Nadu Fishermen; Protests Planned for Their Release

TPN Correspondent | Chennai

The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested 10 fishermen from Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, accusing them of trespassing into Sri Lankan territorial waters. The incident took place during a late-night operation on Wednesday, where three mechanized fishing boats were also seized. The fishermen were apprehended for allegedly crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), according to Tamil Nadu coastal police.

In response to the arrests, the families of the detained fishermen, along with local fishing communities, have called on both the State and Central governments to intervene immediately and secure their release. Fishermen's association leaders have announced plans for large-scale protests in Rameswaram and other coastal areas on Thursday, denouncing the ongoing arrests.

This is the latest in a series of similar incidents. Just 10 days ago, on February 9, Sri

Lankan authorities arrested 14 fishermen from Tamil Nadu and seized their mechanized fishing boat. Earlier, on February 3, 10 fishermen from Rameswaram were detained for the same reason. The Sri Lankan Navy has consistently arrested Tamil Nadu fishermen in recent weeks. On January 26, 34 fishermen were arrested from Rameswaram and Thangachimadam, along with three seized boats. Another 13 fishermen were detained the week before, with their boat confiscated.



Fishermen's associations have expressed outrage over these repeated arrests, considering them a serious threat to their livelihoods. Antony John, a leader from the fishermen's

association in Rameswaram, voiced strong concerns about the escalating situation. He condemned the frequent detentions and the shooting incidents that have resulted in injuries to local fishermen. "The Sri Lankan Navy's actions are affecting our livelihoods. We are risking our lives and equipment every day," he said.

The associations have urged the Indian government to take swift diplomatic action to secure the release of the detained fishermen and recover the impounded boats. They have also called for a permanent resolution, advocating for a bilateral agreement with Sri Lanka to address the issue. Fishermen's associations have sent letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting urgent intervention to prevent further arrests and safeguard coastal communities. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin has also written to External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, urging diplomatic efforts to secure the fishermen's release.

Case Against Social Media Handles For Sharing Fake Maha Kumbh Video From Pakistan



TPN Correspondent | UP

Uttar Pradesh Police has initiated legal action against 101 social media accounts across 10 cases for allegedly spreading false information related to the Maha Kumbh and Prayagraj, following directives from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to combat fake news and misinformation surrounding the event.

Prashant Kumar, the Director General of Police (DGP) for Uttar Pradesh, confirmed that a thorough cyber patrolling strategy was implemented to track and counter the spread of misleading content. The authorities have been actively monitoring social media plat-

forms for fake posts, rumors, and cybercrimes related to the mega event.

On Wednesday, it was revealed that certain accounts had falsely associated a video from Pakistan's Karak district with a stampede at the Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj. The video was accompanied by a misleading narrative suggesting that people were losing their lives in the pursuit of washing away their sins. However, upon verification, the video was found to show a road accident in Pakistan caused by a trailer's brake failure in January 2025.

The Kumbh Mela administration and the Uttar Pradesh Police swiftly refuted these

claims on their social media platforms. As part of their ongoing crackdown, an FIR was filed against 26 social media accounts by Kotwali Kumbh Mela Police for attempting to create fear and damage the event's reputation by misrepresenting the accident as a stampede.

Since the start of the Maha Kumbh, police have registered 10 cases involving 101 social media accounts for spreading misinformation. Past incidents include the misrepresentation of fire drills as real fires, false claims about bodies being disposed of in the river, and fabricated reports of violence at the Kumbh.

DGP Prashant Kumar reiterated the importance of robust cyber monitoring to safeguard the event and urged the public to refrain from sharing unverified information. He encouraged citizens to verify any content related to the Maha Kumbh through the official fact-checking accounts of the Kumbh Mela Police and Uttar Pradesh Police.

Rekha Gupta: BJP's Chief Minister Choice Reflects a Decade-Long Strategy



By appointing Rekha Gupta, a first-time MLA, as the Chief Minister of the National Capital Territory of Delhi, the BJP leadership has continued a well-established pattern that has been fine-tuned over the last decade by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. The BJP has consistently chosen relatively younger leaders, in their 40s or 50s, who are committed to the party's ideology, have proven organizational capabilities, and are seen as capable of managing the state's affairs for the long term. Rekha Gupta, known for her approachable and friendly demeanor, may not have been as widely recog-

nized as some of her colleagues in the party, but her rise to leadership speaks volumes about her dedication and political acumen. She does not exhibit the typical aura that one might expect from a high-profile politician, which sets her apart. However, her extensive background in party work and leadership has earned her respect within the BJP. Her political journey began in student politics, where she first gained prominence as the General Secretary of the Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU) in 1995, a position she won as a nominee of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the RSS. Despite facing

setbacks, including a loss in the 2015 assembly elections and the Mayor's election to AAP, Rekha Gupta did not back down. She remained persistent and continued her work in various capacities, including as the Chairperson of different municipal committees, Vice President of the BJP's National Mahila Morcha, and General Secretary of the party's Delhi unit. In the 2025 assembly election, she triumphed with a significant margin of nearly 30,000 votes, which is remarkable by Delhi's standards.

Rekha Gupta has been widely praised as an excellent choice to lead Delhi, a rare consensus in today's polarized political climate. With no baggage from the past and a spotless track record, she represents a refreshing change. Her identity as a woman and her roots in the Vaishya community, two key social support bases for the BJP, are additional advantages. In terms of leadership style, Gupta brings a contrast to the aggressive and confrontational politics of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), particularly the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal and his close associate Atishi. Her style is one of poise and conciliation, signaling a potential shift toward a more cooperative approach. For voters seeking change, Rekha Gupta embodies this new direction. Gupta has also assembled a promising cabinet, including key leaders such as Pravesh Sahib Singh Verma, Ashish Sood, Majinder Singh Sirsa, Kapil Mishra, Ravindra Indraj Singh,

and Pankaj Kumar Singh. These individuals represent different regions of Delhi and various social segments, ensuring broad representation within the government.

The broader goals and expectations for the new BJP government in Delhi were outlined by PM Modi during his address to party workers at the national headquarters following the election results. With the BJP now in power both in Delhi and at the Centre, there is hope that the tensions between the Delhi Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister, which had become a daily feature under AAP's rule, will finally subside. The new government is expected to work in harmony with the Centre to deliver effective governance.

Even before Gupta's swearing-in, efforts to clean the Yamuna River had already begun, with images of machines being used to clean the water going viral. Additionally, repair work on damaged roads in certain areas has already started.

In line with her promises, Gupta's first major announcement as Chief Minister was to transfer ₹2,500 as monthly assistance to eligible women's bank accounts by March 8, International Women's Day.

While Gupta faces significant challenges, the resources and support from the Modi government offer her a unique opportunity to transform Delhi into a model city known for its hygiene, infrastructure, and governance.



Congress Reshuffle: Rahul Chooses His Inner Circle, But Can They Deliver?



The Congress party has recently carried out a long-awaited reshuffle in its secretariat, but it appears to be a half-hearted effort, especially coming after three consecutive state poll defeats. The reshuffle includes the appointment of two new general secretaries and a handful of changes to the party's state in-charges. The central question is whether this new team can strengthen Rahul Gandhi, who, after reaching a high point last year with 99 seats in the Lok Sabha, is now facing a challenging period.

Rahul's Inner Circle

It is clear that Rahul Gandhi has carefully chosen his inner circle, promoting trusted allies who have been working behind the scenes. One common criticism of Gandhi has been that he fails to bring the party along with him and often operates independently. However, with his close associates now in prominent positions, that perception could change.

The new appointments are strategic,

with many of them being leaders from marginalized or minority communities. Bhupesh Baghel, former Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, has been appointed as general secretary for Punjab, while Syed Naseer Hussain will handle Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. Other key appointments include Ajay Kumar Lallu for Odisha, B.K. Hariprasad for Haryana, and Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka for Manipur, Sikkim, Tripura, and Nagaland. Former MP Meenakshi Natrajan will handle Telangana, and K. Raju will take over Jharkhand.

Can This Reshuffle Change Congress's Fate?

The reshuffle raises the question: Can this team change the Congress's fortunes? That remains uncertain. Although Mallikarjun Kharge holds the position of Congress President, K.C. Venugopal, the General Secretary for Organization, continues to be the true power broker behind the scenes, largely due to his strong ties to the Gandhi family. Priyanka

Gandhi Vadra also holds a significant role, though her exact function in the party remains ambiguous. One notable aspect of the reshuffle is that the "old guard" has been largely sidelined, with many experienced leaders passed over in favor of younger figures. This could be seen as Rahul Gandhi's attempt to reassert control and break away from the legacy of senior leaders whose authority he may find limiting.

Focus on Bihar and Punjab

Two key regions stand out in the reshuffle: Punjab and Bihar. Baghel's appointment to Punjab is curious, given his recent track record of failure in Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. With BJP, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), and AAP all vying for influence in Punjab, it remains to be seen if Baghel's leadership will help Congress regain ground.

In Bihar, the Congress continues to play second fiddle to the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The appointment of Krishna Allavaru, a relatively low-profile leader, as the in-charge for Bihar, suggests that the Congress is content with its junior status within the alliance. This aligns with Rahul Gandhi's recent efforts to strengthen ties with Lalu Prasad Yadav and his son, Tejashwi, further signaling Congress's dependence on regional parties in key states like Bihar and Puducherry.

A Deeper Issue: Lack of Soul-Searching

The Congress party's primary issue is that it has not engaged in any serious soul-searching since its near-collapse in the 2014 general elections. The formation of the INDIA bloc—an alliance of opposition parties—is essentially an admission that Congress cannot defeat the BJP alone.



The reshuffle, which includes two new general secretaries and nine new in-charges, is unlikely to energize party workers or address the party's deep-rooted challenges. Although the new appointees are trusted by Rahul Gandhi, their effectiveness remains to be seen, especially as the future of the INDIA bloc is uncertain. Furthermore, Congress continues to face an existential crisis in states like Tamil Nadu and

West Bengal, where it struggles to maintain relevance.

In conclusion, the success of this reshuffle hinges more on Rahul Gandhi's leadership than on the new team itself. It remains to be seen if this team can deliver the much-needed revitalization for Congress, or if it will simply be another chapter in the party's ongoing struggle.



PM Modi, Murmu and Amit Shah greet people of Arunachal, Mizoram on statehood day

- Hails Mizoram's traditions, Arunachal's biodiversity
- Calls both states symbols of India's rich cultural heritage
- Emphasizes unity, development, of the states

TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Droupadi Murmu, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah extended their heartfelt greetings to the people of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram as both states marked their Statehood Day.

Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram attained the status of states on February 20, 1987. Prime Minister Modi took to social media to share warm wishes with the people of Mizoram, highlighting the state's breathtaking landscapes, deep-rooted traditions, and the warmth of its people. "Warm greetings to the people of Mizoram on their



Statehood Day! This vibrant state is known for its breathtaking landscapes, deep-rooted traditions and the remarkable warmth of its people," PM Modi wrote. He further lauded the Mizo culture, calling it a beautiful blend of heritage and harmony. The Prime Minister wished for Mizoram to continue to prosper and achieve even greater heights in the future.

In a separate post, PM Modi also greeted the people of Arunachal Pradesh, emphasizing the state's rich traditions and its close connection to nature. He praised the hardworking and dynamic people of the state for their contributions

to India's growth. Modi noted that Arunachal Pradesh's vibrant tribal heritage and stunning biodiversity made the state truly special. "May Arunachal Pradesh continue to flourish, and may its journey of progress and harmony continue to soar in the years to come," he added.

President Droupadi Murmu also conveyed her warm greetings, acknowledging both states as being blessed with abundant natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. In her message, she described Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram as exemplifying the best of India. She expressed her belief that both states represent the diverse and vibrant fabric of the nation.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah joined in the celebrations, recognizing the importance of these states in the national landscape. His greetings echoed the sentiments of unity, development, and progress, highlighting the significant role that Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram play in India's growth and success.

As Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram celebrate their Statehood Day, the leaders' messages reflect a commitment to continued development, harmony, and the celebration of the unique cultural identities of these two states.



Calcutta High Court Chief Justice Recuses Himself from R.G. Kar Rape and Murder PIL Case
TPN Correspondent | J&K

Calcutta High Court Chief Justice T.S. Sivagnanam recused himself on Thursday from hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) filed in connection with the rape and murder of a junior doctor at the R.G. Kar Medical College & Hospital in August last year. The PIL had been filed against former Kolkata Police Commissioner Vineet Kumar Goyal, alleging that he revealed the victim's identity while interacting with the media, which led to nationwide protests.

As the case came before the division bench of Chief Justice Sivagnanam and Justice Chaitali Chatterjee, the Chief Justice expressed his desire to step down from the case for personal reasons. He directed the court authorities to remove the matter from the cause list, and it will now be referred to another division bench for hearing.

The PIL, filed in November last year during the height of protests following the tragic incident, sought the registration of an FIR against Goyal. The division bench had earlier directed the Union Department of Personnel & Training (DOPT) to be included as a party in the case, as it is the cadre-control authority for all Indian Police Service (IPS) officers like Goyal. The court sought an affidavit from DOPT explaining what action could be taken against any all-India service officer for breaching the law.

The Union government had informed the Calcutta High Court that there were no restrictions preventing the West Bengal government from taking action against Goyal. It also mentioned that the petitioner could make a fresh appeal if the state government failed to act.

Goyal, who is currently the Additional Director General of the West Bengal Police's Special Task Force (STF), faced widespread criticism for his handling of the initial investigation. Junior doctors had demanded his removal, and the Chief Minister eventually replaced him with Manoj Kumar Verma. The investigation was later transferred to the CBI.

Both the Supreme Court and the Calcutta High Court had previously made strong observations about the revelation of the victim's identity. It remains to be seen which division bench will now hear the case.



Maharashtra Minister Manikrao Kokate Gets 2-Year Jail In Cheating Case

TPN Correspondent | Nashik

Maharashtra Agriculture Minister and NCP leader Manikrao Kokate was sentenced to two years in prison by a Nashik court on Thursday in connection with a 1995 case. The case involved charges of submitting fake documents to obtain flats under a government quota meant for the Low Income Group (LIG).

Following the conviction, Kokate told reporters that the court had granted him bail, and he planned to challenge the judgment by filing an appeal in the High Court.

The court also convicted Kokate's brother, Sunil Kokate, in the same case, imposing a fine of Rs 50,000 each on both brothers. However, two other individuals involved in the case were acquitted by the court. The case was originally filed in 1995 based on a complaint by former minister, the late T. S. Dighole, who had political differences with Kokate.

According to the prosecution, the Kokate brothers had been allotted two flats in the Yeolakar Mala area of Nashik under the Chief Minister's 10% discretionary quota, which was meant for LIG citizens. The brothers allegedly misrepresented their eligibility by falsely claiming to belong to the LIG category and denying ownership of any property in the city.

The case was brought to light when Dighole lodged a complaint, prompting a police investigation. The Kokate brothers were charged with cheating, forgery, and other offenses under the Indian Penal Code.

The ruling has sparked political reactions, with the rival NCP (SP) calling for Kokate's resignation following the verdict. Kokate's situation could also lead to his disqualification as an MLA if he does not receive relief from the High Court.

This case adds to the challenges facing the NCP, as Kokate is the second minister in the Ajit Pawar-led NCP faction of the BJP-led state government to face legal troubles. Cabinet Minister Dhananjay Munde is currently under scrutiny following his aide's arrest in an extortion case linked to a village sarpanch's murder in Beed district in December 2024.

Week After President's Rule, Manipur Governor's 7-Day Arms Ultimatum

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla has called on people from all communities in the state to surrender any looted or illegally held weapons and ammunition within the next seven days. In a statement issued today, Governor Bhalla emphasized that no punitive action would be taken against those who comply with this directive before the deadline. However, he warned that strict legal measures would follow for those who fail to return illegal weapons after the seven-day period.

This announcement comes as Manipur continues to grapple with the aftermath of violent ethnic clashes between the Meitei community and the Kuki tribes that have disrupted the region for nearly two years. These tensions, compounded by the state's open border with Myanmar, have led to significant unrest, forcing the government to take drastic measures. Currently, Manipur is under President's rule, following the resignation of Chief Minister N Biren Singh and his council of ministers on February 9. The state assembly is now in suspended animation, with elected members no longer holding power.

Governor Bhalla's call for disarmament is part of an effort to restore peace and normalcy in a region that has endured immense hardship over the past



20 months. The violence, which has deeply affected both the valley and hill areas of the state, has disrupted daily life and led to the loss of numerous lives. In his statement, the Governor urged all communities, whether from the valley or the hills, to actively participate in ceasing hostilities and working towards maintaining peace and order.

The appeal for the voluntary surrender of weapons aims to defuse ongoing tensions and create a more secure environment for the people of Manipur. While the Governor expressed understanding for the suffering endured by the people, he stressed the importance of collective responsibility in ensuring the restoration of harmony. The state's leadership, now under President's rule, is hoping this initiative will help bring an end to the violence and allow residents to return to their normal lives.

UGC draft regulations 2025 aimed at sidelining states from higher education: Kerala CM

TPN Correspondent | Thiruvananthapuram

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan strongly criticized the draft University Grants Commission (UGC) regulations of 2025 on Thursday, stating that they significantly diminish and even sideline the role of state governments in higher education. Speaking at a National Convention on the draft UGC regulations, attended by ministers from neighboring states like Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, Vijayan expressed concerns about the implications for state autonomy.

Vijayan pointed out that under the draft regulations, the appointment of Vice Chancellors (VCs) would be under the control of Chancellors, who are typically Governors appointed by the central government. He warned that this could lead to politically motivated selections that would harm the quality of higher education. The Kerala CM highlighted what he called "gubernatorial excesses" experienced in opposition-ruled states, including Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Punjab, where Governors have interfered in university affairs.

He also referenced the state's previous experience with former Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan, who had withheld assent to bills related to university administration, forcing the state government to approach the Supreme Court. Vijayan further criticized the draft regulations for introducing "new and arbitrary criteria" for the promotion of academic staff, describing these changes as an infringement on the autonomy of states.



Maharashtra Dy CM Eknath Shinde receives death threat; email warns of blowing up his car



TPN Correspondent | Delhi

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde received a death threat via email on Thursday, February 20, which warned of an explosion targeting the Shiv Sena leader's car. Along with Shinde, the Goregaon and JJ Marg police stations and the Mantralaya (state secretariat) also received similar threatening messages.

Mumbai Police, along with the Crime Branch, have launched a detailed investigation to trace the sender's IP address and identify those responsible for the threat. In response to the incident, security around Shinde has been bolstered to ensure his safety.

Shinde is currently in Delhi to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Rekha Gupta as Delhi's Chief Minister. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed his joy, stating, "It is a matter of joy that our 'Ladli Behna' (beloved sister) will take the oath in Delhi... We thank PM Modi for this." The ceremony was attended by various political leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, and other key Union Ministers and NDA Chief Ministers and Deputy Ministers.

This is not the first time that Shinde has faced a death threat. Earlier, in February 2024, a 19-year-old college student had issued similar threats to Shinde and his son, MP Shrikant Shinde, via social media. The accused student, identified as Shubham Warkad, was arrested by the Mumbai Crime Branch from Pune on February 16, 2024. He had posted the threats on the social media platform X, prompting immediate police intervention.

Authorities had charged Warkad under sections 506(2) and 505(1)(B) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). The police investigation into the recent death threat continues, with heightened vigilance around the Deputy CM's security.

Indian Man Arrested For Balloon Explosion That Injured Nepal Deputy PM Bishnu Paudel



TPN Correspondent | Kathmandu

An Indian national, Kamlesh Kumar, has been arrested in Nepal in connection with an incident during the inauguration of the 'Visit Pokhara Year 2025' tourism event, where Deputy Prime Minister Bishnu Paudel sustained minor burn injuries. Police revealed that Kumar was responsible for filling hydrogen gas into balloons, which later exploded during the ceremony.

The explosion occurred on February 15, shortly after Paudel and Pokhara Metropolitan City Mayor Dhanraj Acharya released the hydrogen gas-filled balloons along with a banner. This was part of a symbolic gesture that included lighting candles through an electric switch. The balloons caught fire when the flames from the candles were too close, causing them to explode. Both Paudel and Acharya suffered burns and were airlifted to Kathmandu for medical treatment.

Following the incident, a case was filed against the 41-year-old Kumar in Kaski district court, as confirmed by Deputy Superintendent of Police Basanta Sharma. The explosion was reportedly triggered by a spark from the automatic switch that ignited the hydrogen-filled balloons.

The incident was captured on video by numerous social media users, with footage showing the balloons bursting into a large explosion and injuring those nearby. Paudel, who also serves as Nepal's finance minister, and Acharya suffered burns on their hands and faces. Paudel was discharged from Kirtipur Burn Hospital in Kathmandu on Monday after receiving treatment, while Acharya remained under medical care for a few more days.

In response to the incident, Home Minister Ramesh Lekhak quickly formed an investigation committee to look into the matter and determine the cause and responsibility for the explosion. The event, which was meant to highlight tourism in Pokhara, turned tragic due to the mishandling of hazardous materials.



Russia Holds "The Cards" In Peace Talks With Ukraine: Trump

TPN Correspondent | Russia

US President Donald Trump has stated that Russia holds a significant advantage in the ongoing peace talks regarding the Russia-Ukraine war, as they control a large portion of Ukrainian territory. In comments reported by the BBC, Trump expressed his belief that Russia has the upper hand in negotiations due to their territorial gains. "I think the Russians want to see the war end, I really do. I think they have the cards a little bit, because they've taken a lot of territory. They have the cards," he said.

This statement comes in the wake of a high-level meeting between US officials, led by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and top Russian diplomats in Saudi Arabia on February 18. Ukraine was notably absent from the talks, prompting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to cancel his planned visit, which had been scheduled for Wednesday.

Trump addressed the situation at a press conference at his residence in Florida, questioning Ukraine's absence from the discussions. "Today I heard, 'Oh, well, we weren't invited.' Well, you've been there for three years. You should have ended it three years ago. You should have never started it. You could have made a deal," Trump remarked.

In response to the US-Russia talks, Zelensky criticized Trump, stating that the former president was operating in a "disinformation space." He expressed his disapproval of Trump's stance, suggesting that it lacked understanding of the situation's complexity.

Meanwhile, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov confirmed that Russia is open to continuing discussions with the US on all fronts. Peskov stated that Russia "absolutely agrees with the American administration" that negotiations are essential to achieve peace and end the conflict as soon as possible.

Germany Prepares for Critical Federal Election: A Race Between Scholz, Merz, and Weidel

- Germany votes on February 23 to elect a new chancellor
- Scholz, Merz, and Weidel lead a highly competitive race
- CDU leads in polls; coalition talks expected post-election

TPN Correspondent | Berlin

Germany is set to hold its crucial federal election on Sunday, February 23, with voters choosing the next chancellor to shape the future of the country and its role within the European Union. The election follows the collapse of Chancellor Olaf Scholz's coalition government at the end of 2024, prompting snap polls to determine Germany's leadership. Scholz, seeking a second term, faces strong opposition from Friedrich Merz, the leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and Alice Weidel, a far-right candidate from the Alternative for Germany (AfD).

Top Contenders

Olaf Scholz: The 66-year-old incumbent from the Social Democrats (SPD) has served as chancellor since December 2021. Scholz is seeking re-election after leading efforts to modernize Germany's military, supply weapons to Ukraine, and tackle energy shortages. However, his three-party coalition suffered infighting, leading to its collapse in November 2024.

Friedrich Merz: At 69, Merz is the leader of the CDU and the front-runner in the race, according to recent polls. A conservative voice, Merz has made curbing immigration a central issue. Though he lacks direct government experience, his leadership has brought the CDU to prominence after Angela Merkel's tenure.



Robert Habeck: The 55-year-old co-leader of the Green Party, currently serving as vice chancellor and economy and climate minister, is another key contender. Habeck's tenure has been marked by his role in managing energy issues and spearheading environmental policies, though his ministry's proposals on heating systems have been divisive.

Alice Weidel: The 46-year-old economist is leading the far-right AfD in a historic bid for chancellor. Though the AfD is unlikely to form a government, Weidel's candidacy highlights the growing influence of far-right politics in Germany.

Election Outlook and Coalition Dynamics

Election results are expected to be confirmed by Sunday evening, though final outcomes may take longer due to post-election vote counting. Germany's proportional voting system often leads to coalition governments, making post-election negotiations crucial. Given the fragmentation in German politics, coalition talks could extend for months.

With no party likely to win an outright majority, the key to forming a stable government will lie in alliances between the SPD, CDU, Greens, and possibly the AfD. Recent polls show the CDU leading with 30%, followed by the AfD at 20%. Scholz's SPD has dropped to third with just 16%, highlighting the shifting political landscape in Germany.

India Responds After Illegal Migrants Deported By US Seek "Help" In Panama



TPN Correspondent | Panama City

India is working closely with Panamanian authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of Indian migrants who were recently deported by the United States to Panama. According to the Indian embassy in Panama, the deportees are currently safe and secure at a hotel where they are being detained. The embassy confirmed that the migrants have access to essential facilities, and a consular team has been granted access to provide assistance.

"Panamanian authorities have informed us that a group of Indians have reached Panama from the US. They are safe and secure at a hotel with all essential facilities. Embassy team has obtained consular access. We are working closely with the host Government to ensure their well-being," the embassy said in a statement on X (formerly Twitter).

This announcement follows reports that nearly 300 migrants, including individuals from India, Iran, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and China, were being held in

Panama after being deported from the United States under former President Donald Trump's administration. Some deportees were seen displaying desperate messages through their hotel room windows, pleading for help and stating, "We are not safe in our country."

In response, Panama's authorities have denied claims that the migrants are being detained against their will. Panamanian Security Minister Frank Abrego stated that these deportees are receiving medical care and food as part of a migration agreement between Panama and the United States. However, they are not allowed to leave the hotel until arrangements are made for their repatriation to their countries of origin.

The United States has been using Panama as a transit point for deportees due to logistical challenges in deporting individuals directly to certain countries. Costa Rica is also expected to receive a similar flight carrying third-country deportees. The US has adopted a tough stance on undocumented migration under President Trump, with plans to deport large numbers of individuals as part of his administration's immigration policies.

Why Would One Be Afraid?: Mexican President On Donald Trump's Threats

TPN Correspondent | Mexico

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has expressed confidence in the face of US President Donald Trump's threats of mass deportations, trade tariffs, and military intervention to combat drug cartels. Sheinbaum, speaking at a daily press conference, stated that she does not fear Trump's warnings because she has the support of the Mexican people.

When asked about Trump's recent comments, Sheinbaum confidently responded, "No. I have the support of the people. When one has certainty and conviction and knows what one's principles are, why would one be afraid?" She emphasized that Mexico's sovereignty would never be violated, and if it were, the entire country would stand together to defend it.

Sheinbaum's remarks followed Trump's



statement that Mexico is "run by drug cartels" and his accusations that Mexican authorities were allowing millions of people to enter the United States illegally. Trump also offered his "help" to curb the flow of immigration.

Sheinbaum allayed concerns over Trump's actions by noting that there is ongoing dialogue between the two governments. She stressed that while Mexico does not support

drug cartels or organized crime, it firmly defends its sovereignty and would not accept any "extraterritorial measures" resulting from the US designating drug cartels as terrorist organizations.

The tension escalated earlier this month when Trump threatened, but later postponed, a 25% tariff on Mexican imports, aimed at pressuring Mexico to take stronger action against its drug cartels. Trump had also ordered the designation of some Mexican drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations, a move that is expected to be finalized soon.

In response to Trump's tariff threat, Mexico deployed 10,000 National Guard troops to its northern border. Meanwhile, the Mexican Defense Secretary, Ricardo Trevilla, addressed the issue of US military flights, stating they had not entered Mexican airspace, although their purpose remained unclear.

Domestic Markets Consolidate as Metals, Energy & Auto Support Recovery Amid Global Uncertainty

Domestic stock markets closed slightly lower on Thursday. Consolidation is underway in the benchmark and broad indices. If the respective sectoral indices rebound for a few more days, a direction will emerge for the markets. The indices fell in the morning due to mixed signals from Asian and international markets and FIIs leaving. Later, investors bought attractive shares and found support from metal, energy and auto shares, leading to a recovery. Nifty 18 and Sensex lost 203 points.

The BSE Sensex, which closed at 75,939 in the previous session, opened at 75,672 on Thursday. It touched an intraday low of 75,463. It reached an intraday high of 75,794. It finally closed at 75,735, down 203 points. The NSE Nifty, which opened at 22,821, touched a low of 22,812 and a high of 22,923. It closed at 22,913, down 19 points. The Nifty Bank fell 235 points to settle at 49,334.

In the Nifty50, 28 companies gained while 22 lost. Shares of auto, media, metal, PSU bank, realty, oil and gas sectors rose. Bank, finance, IT, and private bank shares faced selling pressure. Shriram Finance, NTPC, M&M, BEL, and Adani Ports were the top gainers. HDFC Bank, Maruti, TechM, Tata Consumer, and HCL Tech were the top losers.



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Market breadth in the NSE today turned in favor of buyers. Of the 2,904 shares traded, 1,998 gained and 830 lost. 22 shares hit 52-week highs. 106 hit 52-week lows.

SEBI chief Madhabipuri Buch said that the key performance indicators for IPOs will be completely changed. The rupee strengthened by 28 paise to settle at 86.66 against the dollar. Experts estimated that the impact of Trump's retaliatory tariffs on Indian pharma companies will be minimal, while the US will suffer the most. India Vicks closed down 4.5% today at 14.71. Sri Lankan cabinet has approved NTPC to set up two solar power plants

in Sampur. Goldman Sachs estimates that the impact of Trump's tariffs on India's GDP will be only 0.1 to 0.6 percent. The Indian Defense Ministry has signed a contract worth Rs 1220 crore with Bharat Electronics. Motilal Oswal has given a buy rating to JSW Steel for Rs 1150 crore. It is learnt that LT Minerals has received orders worth Rs 2500-5000 crore from the steel and aluminum sectors. 10 lakh shares have changed hands in Vedanta.

1. BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange)
The Bombay Stock Exchange is one of Asia's oldest and most established stock exchanges. It provides trading, clearing, and settlement services to a wide range



of securities and plays a pivotal role in the Indian capital market. Strong brand reputation and technological upgrades. Beneficiary of increased investor participation and digital trading initiatives. Outlook depends on overall market sentiment and regulatory developments.

2. Shriram Finance
Shriram Finance is a leading NBFC focused on commercial vehicle financing, consumer loans, and other asset-based lending. It is part of the well-regarded Shriram Group. Consistent revenue and profit growth driven by a robust loan portfolio. Solid asset quality with controlled NPAs and strong returns on equity. Positioned well to benefit from rising credit demand and expanding retail finance.



3. Tata Steel
Tata Steel is one of the world's largest steel producers, operating in both domestic and international markets with a diversified product mix. Historically strong revenue growth, though subject to commodity cyclicity. Focus on cost optimization and sustainable practices supports long-term competitiveness. Global steel market trends and infrastructure demand remain key growth drivers.



4. NTPC
NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) is India's largest power utility, primarily engaged in thermal power generation and increasingly investing in renewable energy projects. Stable revenue stream due to long-term power purchase agreements and regulated tariffs. Consistent cash flows and a strong asset base supported by government backing. Expansion into renewable energy enhances its long-term growth outlook.



5. IGL (Indraprastha Gas Ltd.)
IGL is a leading city gas distribution company in the National Capital Region, supplying natural gas to residential, commercial, and industrial consumers. Benefits from the growing demand for cleaner fuels and government initiatives to increase urban gas distribution. Consistent revenue and earnings growth with a robust customer base. Profitability can be influenced by regulatory changes and fuel price volatility.



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Indian Auto Component Industry Set for Moderate Growth Amid Challenges

The Indian auto component industry is expected to see an 8-10 percent growth in revenue in the financial year 2025-26, according to a report from rating agency ICRA. This follows a more moderate growth projection for the current year, 2024-25, where revenues are forecast to rise by only 7-9 percent, down from the high growth rate of 14 percent witnessed in 2023-24.

Despite this slowdown in growth, ICRA's report indicates that operating margins for the sector are likely to remain stable, hovering between 11-12 percent in both 2024-25 and 2025-26. This stability is expected to be supported by operating leverage, which allows companies to better manage fixed costs as they scale up production, along with an increase in the content per vehicle and added value from the components produced.

However, there are significant challenges facing the industry, particularly in the form of rising ocean freight rates. The ongoing disruptions along the Red Sea route have caused a surge in shipping costs, with rates jumping 2-3 times higher in 2024 compared to the previous year. This surge in ocean freight rates could potentially impact the margins of auto component suppliers, especially those with substantial exports or imports. A further increase in these rates could lead to additional financial strain for businesses that rely heavily on global supply chains.

Looking ahead, ICRA estimates the auto component industry will incur capital expenditures (Capex) of Rs 25,000-30,000 crore in 2025-26. These investments will be directed towards capacity expansion, localisation efforts, and technological advancements, including the development of electric vehicles (EVs). At present, only 30-40 percent of the EV supply chain in India is localised, with progress made in areas such as traction motors, control units, and battery management systems. However, battery cells, which account for 35-40 percent of the vehicle cost, remain fully imported, indicating a continued dependency on global supply chains in the short term.

Overall, while the Indian auto component industry faces a moderate growth outlook and some external challenges, its focus on expanding capacity and localising supply chains—especially in the EV sector—presents opportunities for long-term stability and growth.



India's Economic Outlook Remains Strong Amid Global Uncertainty

India's economic activity is expected to gain momentum in the second half of 2024-25, according to the latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) monthly bulletin, which highlights the country's resilience despite global challenges. High-frequency indicators point to a recovery in various sectors, with the economy on track to maintain its position as the fastest-growing major economy in the world during 2025-26, with GDP growth estimates of 6.5% from the IMF and 6.7% from the World Bank.

The report underscores that the Union Budget for 2025-26 has struck a balanced approach, prioritizing fiscal consolidation while supporting growth through continued focus on capital expenditure (Capex). The budget also includes measures to boost household incomes and consumption. The effective capital expenditure/GDP ratio is projected to rise to 4.3% in 2025-26 from 4.1% in the previous year, reflecting the government's commitment to long-term infrastruc-



ture development. Retail inflation has moderated to a five-month low of 4.3% in January, driven by a sharp decline in vegetable prices due to the arrival of winter crops. This has helped alleviate cost pressures for consumers. Furthermore, high-frequency indicators indicate a recovery in industrial activity and overall economic momentum during the latter half of 2024-25, after a slower first half.

Sector-specific indicators reflect this recovery: tractor sales, fuel consump-

tion, and air passenger traffic all show positive trends. Rural demand remains robust, buoyed by higher farm incomes, with FMCG sales in rural areas growing by 9.9% in Q3:2024-25, compared to 5.7% in Q2. Urban demand also saw improvement, with a 5% growth in Q3, almost double the growth in the previous quarter.

Investment intentions from the private sector remain stable, with substantial projects sanctioned by banks and financial institutions, totaling nearly ₹1 lakh crore in Q3:2024-25. External Commercial Borrowings and Initial Public Offerings for capital expenditure also showed an uptick.

Despite global uncertainties, including trade tensions and geopolitical risks, India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals have helped cushion the impact, according to the RBI bulletin. The report emphasizes that global trade patterns may undergo a long-term shift due to these uncertainties.

India set to become high-income country by 2047 buoyed by services sector

India is on track to emerge as a high-income country by 2047, with projections indicating its GDP could reach between USD 23 trillion to USD 35 trillion. The services sector will play a significant role in this transformation, contributing around 60 percent to India's GDP by the target year, according to a report by Bain & Company and Nasscom.

Manufacturing will also make a major contribution, expected to account for approximately 32 percent of the GDP. These two sectors—services and manufacturing—are seen as key drivers of India's future economic expansion.

A crucial element in this shift will be the addition of nearly 200 million individuals to the workforce, which presents India with a unique opportunity to create high-value jobs. This demographic change could unlock substantial eco-

nom potential, positioning the country to harness the benefits of a growing, skilled labor force.

The report emphasizes that a sectoral technology roadmap could be instrumental in fueling this transformation. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI)-driven chip design, touchless manufacturing, and backward integration into component manufacturing are expected to make Indian industries more cost-competitive and innovative. As a result, India's technology export share could rise from the current 24 percent to 45-50 percent by 2047, while the sector's contribution to the GDP could grow from 3 percent to between 8-10 percent.



The combination of these factors—economic growth driven by services and manufacturing, a burgeoning workforce, and technological advancements—could position India as a leading global economic powerhouse by mid-century.



WhatsApp Bans Over 8 Million Accounts in a Month



WhatsApp, India's largest social media platform, has banned more than 8.4 million accounts in a single month to curb fraudulent activities and ensure user safety. The move, announced by Meta—the parent company of WhatsApp—comes amid rising concerns about scams and suspicious activities on the platform.

According to Meta's Transparency Re-

port, this mass ban was a direct response to increasing reports from users about fraudulent behavior, prompting the company to take swift action to maintain the integrity of the platform. The banned accounts, totaling approximately 8.45 million, were identified as violating the provisions of Section 4(1)(d) and Section 3A(7) of the Information Technology Act. These measures were part of Meta's ongoing

efforts to uphold safety and compliance within India's digital ecosystem.

The bans took place between August 1 and August 31, with Meta detailing the types of accounts affected. Of the total number, 1.66 million accounts were immediately blocked due to serious violations, while the remaining accounts were banned after thorough investigations revealed suspicious activities. Interestingly, over 1.6 million of these accounts were flagged and banned proactively during routine monitoring, even before receiving specific user complaints. These accounts were found to be engaged in misuse, underlining the importance of early detection in maintaining a safe environment for WhatsApp users.

Meta's aggressive approach reflects its commitment to addressing concerns over fraud on its platforms and improving monitoring systems. The company's actions also serve as a reminder of the increasing responsibility social media platforms have in curbing online scams and providing users with a secure digital experience.

Uber Ditches Commissions for Auto-Rickshaw Drivers Introduces Subscription Model

Uber has announced a major change for auto-rickshaw drivers in India, eliminating its commission fees and replacing them with a subscription model. In a blog post on Tuesday, February 18, the ride-hailing giant revealed that drivers will now keep 100% of the fares earned through the platform.

Previously, Uber charged a commission on each fare, which resulted in drivers receiving only a portion of the total fare. However, with this new model, drivers will no longer face deductions from Uber. Instead, the company will charge a subscription fee for using the platform, allowing drivers to retain the full fare amount paid by passengers.

The shift to a subscription-based structure is designed to offer more earnings stability for auto-rickshaw drivers, particularly during times of fluctuating demand. Uber's move comes as part of its broader efforts to improve relationships with drivers and enhance the overall driver experience.

Uber's decision to move away from com-



missions is seen as a positive step by many auto-rickshaw drivers who often struggled with the impact of commission deductions on their earnings. Now, they will benefit from a predictable cost structure that allows them to keep the entire fare for their services.

The change is expected to have a signifi-

cant impact on Uber's presence in India's auto-rickshaw market, where it competes with local ride-hailing services. By giving drivers greater financial control, Uber hopes to foster better relations with its driver community while ensuring the platform's long-term growth in the Indian market.

Apple iPhone 16e is here with eye on price

Apple introduced the entry-level iPhone 16e on Wednesday, expanding its iPhone 16 lineup with a more affordable model aimed at price-sensitive markets, particularly in regions like India and China. The new iPhone 16e provides nearly identical performance to its higher-priced counterparts but comes at a lower starting price of Rs 59,900. Pre-orders will begin this Friday on Apple's website, with sales set to start on February 28.

The iPhone 16e is equipped with the powerful A18 chip, the same processor found in the flagship iPhone 16 models, ensuring fast and efficient performance. The device also boasts a 6.1-inch OLED display, consistent with the rest of the iPhone 16 series. It includes features like Face ID within a display notch, a customizable Action Button, and a USB-C port, which was first introduced with the iPhone 15. In terms of design, the iPhone 16e has a look reminiscent of the iPhone 14, maintaining a sleek and modern appearance. Notably, the new model is the most affordable iPhone to incorporate Apple's AI capabilities, supporting Apple Intelligence and offering users access to cutting-edge Gen AI features. The iPhone 16e comes with a single-lens 48-megapixel camera, whereas the more expensive iPhone 16 models feature a dual-lens system for enhanced photography. By offering the iPhone 16e, Apple aims to



attract a broader audience, tapping into emerging markets where cost-effective smartphones are in high demand, without compromising on the features that make the iPhone brand so appealing. The

new model delivers a high-quality user experience at a more accessible price, making it an appealing choice for consumers looking for an affordable iPhone with the latest technology.

Google Launches 'Search Screen with Google Lens' for iPhones



In 2024, Google launched an innovative feature called "Circle to Search" for Android users, allowing them to search anything displayed on their screen with a simple gesture. Now, the tech giant has extended this functionality to Apple iPhones with a new feature called "Search Screen with Google Lens."

This enhanced mobile search feature enables iPhone users to search content on their screens without needing to take a screenshot or open a new tab. By using intuitive gestures, such as drawing or highlighting the content they want to search for, users can instantly access search results powered by Google Lens. This allows for a seamless and more efficient search experience.

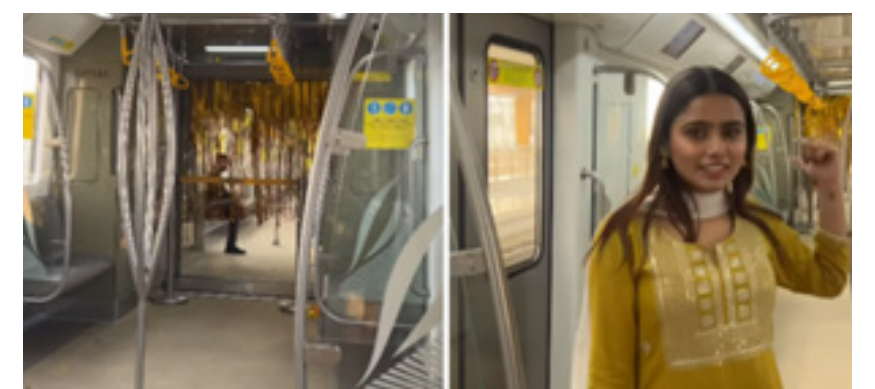
The "Search Screen with Google Lens" feature operates similarly to the Android version, where a user can circle, highlight, or tap text, images, or any other on-screen content. Once the action is performed, Google Lens will instantly analyze the selected content and display rel-

evant search results, making it easier to get more information about anything on the screen in real-time. Additionally, the feature also provides AI-generated overviews, enriching the search experience further.

For example, if users are viewing a foreign language text or an image of an object, they can quickly draw a circle around it, and Google Lens will provide immediate translations or details about the object. This feature brings a new level of convenience to iPhone users by integrating powerful AI technology with mobile search in an interactive way.

This new addition to iOS is part of Google's continued effort to improve and enhance its mobile search capabilities, making it faster, smarter, and more accessible across different platforms. As the search landscape evolves, this feature on iPhones aligns with the growing demand for more efficient, context-sensitive search tools that make information more accessible with minimal effort.

Influencer Claims Haldi Ceremony Took Place Inside Agra Metro Train



A social media influencer has sparked a viral debate after claiming she witnessed a Haldi ceremony taking place inside an Agra Metro train. Divyata Upadhyay, who shared the video on her Instagram account, filmed the unusual event inside a cordoned-off coach of the metro. In the video, Upadhyay pointed out a yellow sparkly curtain hanging at the entrance of the coach, which was allegedly used to separate the designated area for the ceremony. While the exact details inside the coach remained unclear, the influencer claimed that a Haldi function was being organized inside the train.

Upadhyay, sharing her experience with her followers, commented, "Delhi Metro has crowds, we have haldi ceremonies." She explained that, during her journey, she noticed that there were only a few passengers aboard the train, which led her to believe that the authori-

ties may be renting out coaches for private events like these. "It seems like they are renting out coaches for functions," she said. However, the influencer also raised questions regarding the rules of the metro. She pointed out the apparent contradiction, saying, "I have also heard that no eatables are allowed inside the train." The notion of hosting a ceremonial event, which typically involves food and other activities, in a metro train has raised concerns about the logistics and the regulations of the metro system.

While it is unclear whether the event was officially sanctioned, the video sparked widespread attention online, with many users questioning the appropriateness of such an event taking place on public transport. The viral video has since garnered various reactions, with some expressing amusement, while others debated the potential impact on metro operations.

Gill's Century, Shami's Five-Wicket Haul Guide India to Six-Wicket Win Over Bangladesh



Shubman Gill's brilliant century, coupled with Mohammed Shami's career-best five-wicket haul, led India to a comfortable six-wicket victory over Bangladesh in their ICC Champions Trophy opener in Dubai on Thursday. Gill remained

unbeaten on 101 off 129 balls, guiding India to a target of 229 with 3.3 overs to spare. Bangladesh, after opting to bat first, collapsed to 35 for 5 before Towhid Hridoy's fighting 100 (118 balls) lifted them to 228 all out. Shami was the

star with the ball, picking up five wickets for 53 runs and becoming the fastest Indian to reach 200 ODI wickets. India's chase was steady, with Rohit Sharma contributing 41 before falling to Taskin Ahmed. Gill's controlled innings,

alongside important middle-order contributions, ensured India's dominance as they finished at 231 for 4 in 46.3 overs, ahead of their high-stakes match against Pakistan on February 23.

Rohit Sharma Becomes Second Fastest to Complete 11,000 ODI Runs



India's captain, Rohit Sharma, achieved another milestone on Thursday by becoming the second fastest batter to reach 11,000 runs in One-Day Internationals. The milestone came during India's chase of 229 against Bangladesh in their ICC Champions Trophy match, when

he hit Mustafizur Rahman for a boundary in the fourth over. Rohit reached the 11,000-run mark in 261 innings, making him the second fastest behind Virat Kohli, who did it in 222 innings. Rohit is now the fourth Indian and the 10th player overall to achieve this feat.

With 32 centuries and 52 half-centuries, Rohit averages nearly 50 in ODIs and is second on the list of most sixes hit in the format. He follows Sachin Tendulkar (18,246 runs) and is now placed behind Sourav Ganguly (11,363 runs) in the overall ODI run tally.

Fakhar Zaman Ruled Out of ICC Champions Trophy 2025 Due to Injury



In a major blow to Pakistan's ICC Champions Trophy campaign, opener Fakhar Zaman has been ruled out of the remainder of the tournament due to a serious injury. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) confirmed the news on Thursday. Zaman sustained a muscular strain while fielding against New Zealand on

February 19 at Karachi's National Bank Stadium. The injury occurred when he sprinted to intercept a shot from New Zealand's Will Young and felt discomfort in his lower back. Despite initially walking off the field with the team physio, he later returned after New Zealand lost their second wicket. Zaman had made 24 off 41

balls before the injury. The PCB stated that Zaman would not travel with the squad to Dubai for their next match, and further medical assessments would be conducted. This injury comes after Saim Ayub was also ruled out of the tournament due to an ankle fracture.

Mohammed Shami Becomes Fastest Indian to Take 200 ODI Wickets



Mohammed Shami etched his name in the record books by becoming the fastest Indian bowler to reach 200 One-Day International wickets during India's ICC Champions Trophy match against Bangladesh in Dubai on Thursday.

Shami achieved this remarkable milestone by taking three wickets in just his 103rd innings, surpassing Ajit Agarkar's previous record of 133 innings. Shami's achievement adds to his growing stature as one of India's

premier fast bowlers, and his five-wicket haul in the same match further solidified his position. Shami's ability to break records and perform consistently under pressure is a testament to his skill and commitment to the game.

Mohammed Shami Becomes Fastest Indian to Take 200 ODI Wickets



India's 17-year-old tennis prodigy Manas Dhamne, alongside experienced players Ramkumar Ramanathan and SD Prajwal Dev, has been granted wild card entries into the singles main draw of the 2025 Bengaluru Open. The ATP Challenger 125 event will take place at the Karnataka State Lawn Tennis Association (KSLTA) courts in Cubbon Park from February 24 to March 2. Dhamne, a rising star in Indian tennis, recently won his first major title at the M15 Monastir in Tunisia and

made history by becoming the youngest player to win a first-round match at the junior Australian Open. Ramanathan, a key player for India's Davis Cup team, and Prajwal Dev, a seasoned ATP Challenger competitor, will bring their vast experience to the competition. In addition, Kriishi Tyagi and Niki Kaliyanda Poonacha will compete in the qualifiers, aiming for spots in the main draw. The doubles event will also feature 16 teams, including top-ranked Indian and international pairs.

Champions League: Real Madrid and Man City Face Do-or-Die Clash

Defending Champions League holders Real Madrid are set for a crucial second-leg showdown against Manchester City in the round of 16. Madrid holds a slender 3-2 lead heading into the return fixture at home, making it a do-or-die situation for both teams. Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola initially suggested his side had just a 1% chance of progressing, but later backtracked, with Madrid's Carlo Ancelotti also dismissing the claim. This marks the fourth consecutive year that these two sides meet in the knockout stages, with the winner advancing to lift the prestigious trophy each time. The stakes are high, as both teams, past champions, face elimination before reaching the quarterfinals. Elsewhere, Paris Saint-Germain and Borussia Dortmund are in command-



ing positions with 3-0 leads over Brest and Sporting Lisbon, respectively. Juventus leads 2-1 going into their second leg against PSV Eindhoven.



Chiranjeevi and Surekha Celebrate Wedding Anniversary on Flight to Dubai



Megastar Chiranjeevi and his wife Surekha recently celebrated their wedding anniversary in a unique and memorable way — on a flight to Dubai. The couple shared the special moment with close friends, including Akkineni Nagarjuna, Amala, Namrata Shirodkar, and others, who were also onboard. Chiranjeevi took to social media to share photos from the celebration, which quickly went viral. In his heartfelt post on 'X' (formerly Twitter), he expressed his deep affection for Surekha, calling her his "dream partner" and acknowledging how lucky he feels to have her by his side. He went on to say, "Her presence is a

constant source of comfort. A great inspiration. She is my motivator." The actor also expressed gratitude to his friends, family, fans, and well-wishers for their warm wishes on their special day. His post read, "Thank you, soulmate. Thank you to all my friends, fans, family, and well-wishers for your wonderful wishes! Bless you!" The beautiful photos of the couple and their friends from the flight have been widely shared, adding to the warmth and joy of their anniversary celebration. Chiranjeevi and Surekha's loving relationship continues to inspire many, showcasing a deep bond that has lasted for decades.



Srileela Charges Rs. 1.75 Crore for Bollywood Debut, Rs. 3 Crore for Telugu Films

Srileela, who made her mark in Tollywood with the film Pelli Sandadi and became a popular face in the industry, is known for charging Rs. 3 crores for each Telugu film. However, for her Bollywood debut, the actress has reportedly agreed to a much lower remuneration of Rs. 1.75 crores. This adjustment in her fee is attributed to her first venture into Bollywood, where she likely accepted a lower pay to establish herself in the new industry. Srileela's career has

seen a mix of successes and challenges, with her pace slowing down due to some flops in between. However, she made a significant comeback with an item song in Pushpa 2, which brought in new opportunities and offers her way.

In contrast, Rashmika Mandanna, another popular actress, is reportedly charging Rs. 4 crores for her Bollywood film Chavaa and is receiving similar pay in the South film industry as well.



Rakul Preet Singh: Comfort Over Luxury, Wedding Simplicity was the Key



Rakul Preet Singh, who recently married Bollywood producer Jackie Bhagnani, opened up about their decision to keep their wedding simple and intimate. The couple chose to have a private ceremony with only close friends and family in attendance. One of the unique features of the wedding was the no-phone rule, which sparked rumors that they were concerned about photos and videos leaking. However, Rakul clarified in a recent interview that there was no truth to this speculation. According to Rakul, the intention behind not allowing phones was

to ensure that the guests could fully enjoy the moment without distractions. The actress emphasized that for her, comfort was more important than luxury. She further explained that they wanted to keep the wedding personal and relaxed, focusing on the joy of the occasion rather than on extravagant celebrations. After the ceremony, Rakul shared the wedding photos with the media. On the work front, Rakul is gearing up for the release of her latest film, Mere Husband Ki Biwi, which is set to hit the screens on the 21st of this month.

Did Netflix Actually Remove Urvashi Rautela's Scenes from 'Daku Maharaaj'?



Recent rumors suggested that Netflix had removed Urvashi Rautela's scenes from the Telugu-language action-drama Daaku Maharaaj ahead of its streaming release. However, these claims have been debunked by a reliable source, who clarified that the streaming platform will release the film exactly as it was shown in theaters. Netflix announced that Daaku Maharaaj, starring Nandamuri Balakrishna, would be available for streaming starting February 21, 2025. However, the release poster sparked confusion, as it featured actors like Bobby Deol, Pragya Jaiswal, and Shradha Srinath but omitted Urvashi Rautela, despite her having a significant role in the film. Fans quickly noticed the omission and expressed their surprise online. In response to the backlash, Netflix shared individual character slides later, which included Urvashi's photo, seemingly to address the earlier oversight and acknowledge her presence. Despite the controversy surrounding the poster, the film will stream in its entirety without any alterations, remaining true to the original theatrical cut. Daaku Maharaaj, directed by Bobby Kolli, also stars Rishi, Chandini Chowdary, Pradeep Rawat, and others. The film was released in theaters on January 12, 2025, and will now be available to watch on Netflix.

Ibrahim Ali Khan's Debut Film 'Nadaanian' Set for March 7 Release on Netflix

Ibrahim Ali Khan, son of actors Saif Ali Khan and Amrita Singh, is all set to make his debut in the film industry with Nadaanian, which will be released on Netflix on March 7, 2025. The romantic drama also stars Khushi Kapoor and is backed by Dharmatic Entertainment, the digital arm of Dharma Productions, helmed by filmmaker Karan Johar.

Directed by Shauna Gautam, Nadaanian follows the story of a South Delhi diva, a middle-class overachiever boy, and an outrageous plan that unravels as they navigate unexpected emotions. Ibrahim plays the role of Arjun Mehta, while Khushi Kapoor stars as Pia Jai Singh. The official synopsis reads: "Hire him as her fake boyfriend to save her squad. But when

real feelings crash their party, can they handle the mess of falling in love?" In addition to Ibrahim and Khushi, the film features an ensemble cast that includes Mahima Chaudhary, Suniel Shetty, Dia Mirza, and Jugal Hansraj. Karan Johar, along with Apoorva Mehta and Somen Mishra, serves as the producer.

