



# TMC's Kerala Gambit Shakes Up INDI Alliance



**TMC targets Kerala to counter Congress's West Bengal padayatras.**

**Aims to weaken communists and Congress in one stroke.**

**Mahua Mitra, Derek O'Brien meet IUML leaders in Kerala.**

**P.V. Anwar, ex-Left MLA, bolsters TMC's state push.**

**Minority votes in focus as TMC eyes Malappuram.**

**TPN | Avinash Hyderabad, Feb 22:** The once-united INDI Alliance, formed to challenge Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is now crumbling under internal strife, with the Trinamool Congress (TMC) and Congress locking horns. Rahul Gandhi's planned padayatras in West Bengal have rattled TMC chief Mamata Banerjee and her nephew Abhishek, who are determined to avoid a repeat of Congress's Delhi debacle in the 2026 West Bengal polls. In a cunning counterstrike, TMC has set its sights on Kerala, a move that could reshape regional power dynamics. TMC's incursion into Kerala is a calculated masterstroke. The coastal state, a fading stronghold of the communists—longtime foes of TMC in West Bengal—offers a chance to weaken a rival. More crucially, it's a direct jab at Congress, which retains influence in Kerala, home to Priyanka Gandhi's

Wayanad constituency. By planting roots here, TMC aims to stifle Congress's ambitions both locally and in Bengal, where any Congress resurgence threatens Mamata's dominance. Leading the charge are TMC MPs Mahua Mitra and Derek O'Brien, dispatched by Abhishek Banerjee to rally the party's base in Kerala. On Friday, they met Sadikali Shihab Thangal, state president of the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), a key Congress ally in the UDF coalition that secured Priyanka's recent Wayanad victory. Though IUML downplayed the meeting as non-political, its undertones are unmistakable. Mahua has been tasked with courting Muslim and Christian groups, eyeing the minority vote bank that could tilt the scales. Joining them was P.V. Anwar, TMC's state

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# We Will Hunt You Down...

**- Kash Patel's Bold Warning as New FBI Director**

- Kash Patel, Indian-origin, took oath as FBI Director on Friday.
- Confirmed 51-49 by Senate on Thursday.
- Supported by Trump, Bondi, and most GOP.

**TPN Correspondent | Washington**

Kash Patel, an Indian-origin attorney and loyal ally of President Donald Trump, was confirmed by the Senate on Thursday as the ninth Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in a tight 51-49 vote. Patel, who took his oath on Friday administered by Attorney General Pam Bondi, won support from most Republicans. Born in 1980 in New York to Gujarati Indian parents, Patel earned a BA from the University of Richmond and a JD from Pace University. He began as a public defender in Florida, later joining the Department of Justice in 2014, and rose in Trump's circle as a senior aide to Congressman Devin Nunes in 2017, countering Russia probes. Patel held key roles in the National Security Council and Pentagon during Trump's first term, gaining notoriety for promoting "deep state" theories and authoring books like Government Gangsters. On X, Patel thanked Trump and Bondi: "I am honoured to be confirmed as the ninth Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Thank you to President Trump and Attorney General Pam Bondi for your unwavering confidence and support." He pledged to restore trust, saying, "The FBI has a storied legacy—from the 'G-Men' to safeguarding our nation in the wake of 9/11. The American peo-



ple deserve an FBI that is transparent, accountable, and committed to justice. The politicalization of our justice system has eroded public trust—but that ends today." Patel promised to rebuild the FBI's reputation with its staff and partners. "We will rebuild an FBI the American people can be proud of," he said, warning threats: "And to those who seek to harm Americans—consider this your warning. We will hunt you down in every corner of this planet." Patel's appointment holds significance for India, given his heritage and potential ties with the Indian government. Alongside Tulsi Gabbard, another Indian-origin figure in Trump's administration, Patel's role could strengthen U.S.-India collaboration on security issues, including countering threats from Khalistani extremists targeting Indian interests in the U.S. His tough stance may resonate with New Delhi's concerns over transnational separatist activities.

# Mohalla Clinics as 'Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandir'

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

The Delhi government, under Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, has officially renamed the city's 'Mohalla Clinics' as 'Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandir' (U-AAM) and announced a significant upgrade of existing dispensaries. The move is part of the government's broader plan to enhance primary healthcare services in the national capital. Under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, the Delhi government plans to establish 1,139 U-AAMs across the city, ensuring better access to healthcare for all residents. These upgraded healthcare centers will receive special funding under the Na-



tional Health Mission (NHM) to improve infrastructure, medical facilities, and service delivery. The Chief Minister emphasized that the transformation of Mohalla Clinics into U-AAMs aligns with the government's commitment to providing accessible, high-quality healthcare to Delhiites. She stated that these centers will play a crucial role in preventive care, early diagnosis, and affordable

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# Delhi Assembly session from Monday



- Arvinder Lovely appointed protem speaker
- Delhi Assembly session begins Feb 24; Speaker election at 2 PM
- CM Rekha Gupta announces Ayushman Bharat with ₹5 lakh top-up
- 14 pending CAG reports to be tabled in first assembly sitting

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

The first session of the newly elected Delhi legislative assembly is set to begin on February 24, with the election of the assembly speaker

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# CM Rekha Gupta Meets PM Modi

**Vows 'Viksit Delhi' As Ministers Inspect Road Repairs**

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, expressing gratitude for the opportunity to serve as the city's leader. Meanwhile, her Cabinet ministers were out in the field, inspecting road repair works and infrastructure projects across the capital. Before heading to the PM's residence, Gupta addressed her well-wishers from her Shalimar Bagh home, thanking Modi for selecting a "Daughter of Delhi" as CM. She emphasized her commitment to "Viksit Delhi" and highlighted her first Cabinet decision—approving the Ayushman Bharat scheme. "Our mission is to achieve Viksit Delhi as mandated by PM Modi," she declared, ending her address with chants of "Jai Shri Ram" and "Bharat Mata ki Jai."



Following her meeting with PM Modi, Gupta convened officials from the Public Works Department (PWD) to discuss solutions for dug-up and damaged roads, traffic congestion, and infrastructure upgrades. PWD Minister Parvesh Verma visited the Barapullah Phase-3 project, promising swift payments and environmental clearances to prevent further delays. At Sarai Kale Khan, Verma stressed that road contractors must guarantee a 10-year lifespan for

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# Was Doing Good Job, But...

**Anna Hazare On Arvind Kejriwal's Poll Defeat**



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# Trump's third attack on \$21mn USAID

**'Why are we caring about India's turnout?'**



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## TMC's Kerala Gambit Shakes Up INDI Alliance

coordinator and a former Left-backed MLA who defected after clashing with Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan over corruption claims. The duo's itinerary includes Malappuram, a Muslim-majority area, signaling TMC's intent to disrupt both Congress and the Left. This audacious

strategy underscores the deepening rift within the INDI Alliance, as TMC flexes its muscle beyond Bengal. With tensions simmering, the Congress-TMC showdown promises to escalate, potentially fracturing the opposition's unity further as 2026 looms.

## Mohalla Clinics as 'Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandir'

treatment for citizens, particularly those from economically weaker sections. Additionally, the existing dispensaries across Delhi will also be upgraded to Urban Ayushman Arogya Mandir standards, ensuring that people receive better medical care with enhanced facilities, modern equipment, and an expanded range of services. The government has assured that these upgraded centers will function more

efficiently, with a focus on primary healthcare, maternal and child care, and chronic disease management. The decision marks a major shift in Delhi's healthcare strategy, reinforcing the Viksit Delhi vision of CM Rekha Gupta. The government has directed health officials to speed up the transition process and ensure that all 1,139 U-AAMs are operational as per the planned timeline.

## Delhi Assembly session from Monday

scheduled for 2:00 PM. Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has appointed BJP leader Arvinder Singh Lovely as the protem speaker to oversee the proceedings. Before the speaker's election, the newly elected MLAs will take their oaths at 11:00 AM. According to the Delhi assembly bulletin, LG Saxena will address the house on February 25, following which the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) reports will be tabled. A motion of thanks on the LG's address will be moved later in the day. The discussion on the motion of thanks is set to begin on February 26 at 11:00 AM, after which the assembly will proceed with the election of the deputy speaker. The bulletin further states that notices for the speaker's election must be submitted by February 22 before noon. Meanwhile, newly sworn-in Chief Minister Rekha Gupta chaired the first meeting of her cabinet on Thursday, announcing two major decisions: the implementation of the Ayushman Bharat scheme with a ₹5 lakh top-up and the tabling of 14 pending CAG reports in the first assembly

sitting. Addressing a press conference, Gupta emphasized the BJP's commitment to fulfilling its pre-poll promises. She said that implementing Ayushman Bharat in Delhi was a priority, highlighting that the AAP government had previously refused to adopt the central scheme. She further announced that the Delhi government would cover the cost of the ₹5 lakh top-up and sign an MoU with the Centre to facilitate the scheme's rollout. Additionally, Gupta stressed that her government would ensure transparency by presenting the CAG reports that had been delayed by the previous administration. "In our first cabinet meeting, we discussed and passed two key agendas—implementing Ayushman Bharat in Delhi with a ₹5 lakh top-up and tabling 14 CAG reports in the first assembly session. We will fulfill all commitments made to the people," she stated. With the new assembly session beginning, all eyes will be on the governance priorities of the newly formed BJP government in Delhi.

## CM Rekha Gupta Meets PM Modi

newly built roads to avoid frequent repairs. Meanwhile, Law and Labour Minister Kapil Mishra inspected the poor road conditions in North East Delhi's Khajuri Khas. Criticizing the previous Arvind Kejriwal-led government, Mishra said, "The roads in

and filled with potholes. Under the new work culture, all ministers and officials must work 24 hours to ensure immediate repairs." The Delhi government is expected to continue on-ground inspections in the coming days, prioritizing infrastructure upgrades and urban development.

# CM Rekha Gupta Reviews Delhi's Infrastructure

## Orders Immediate Road Repairs

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta convened a high-level meeting with officials of the Public Works Department (PWD) to assess the state of the capital's infrastructure. During the meeting, she conducted a detailed review of various civic issues, including dug-up roads, damaged stretches, and ongoing traffic congestion, and directed officials to take immediate action for improvement. Emphasizing the importance of well-maintained roads, the Chief Minister instructed officials to expedite repair work and ensure that road construction and maintenance projects adhere to the highest quality standards. She also sought a comprehensive report on ongoing infrastructure projects



and the causes of delays in their completion.

With increasing public grievances over potholes and deteriorating roads, Ms. Gupta stressed the need for swift execution of repair work across key routes in the city. She urged officials to prioritize areas where road conditions have severely impacted daily commuters and assured strict monitoring of all projects. The Chief Minister also discussed long-term measures to improve Delhi's road network, including better coordination between civic bodies, ensuring proper road-laying techniques, and stricter enforcement of contractor accountability. She emphasized that her government is committed to building a "Viksit Delhi" and that infrastructure development will remain a top priority. Officials have been directed to submit a progress report soon, with the Chief Minister vowing regular inspections to ensure the timely execution of projects.

## CAG reports to be tabled in first session of Delhi Assembly

- First session of the newly formed Delhi Assembly to begin on Monday.
- BJP govt to table 14 pending CAG reports on AAP's performance.
- Vijender Gupta likely to be elected as the Assembly Speaker.



**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

The first session of the newly constituted Delhi Assembly is set to begin on Monday, with key discussions and reports lined up. Officials have confirmed that the session will take place on February 24, 25, and 27. One of the major highlights of the session will be the tabling of 14 pending reports from the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, which scrutinize the performance of the previous AAP government. BJP MLA Vijender Gupta is likely to be elected as the Speaker of the 8th Delhi Assembly. Gupta, who was the Leader of the Opposition in the previous Assembly, said that fellow BJP MLA Arvinder Singh Lovely would serve as the Pro-tem Speaker. The newly elected MLAs will take their oath of office on February 24 and 25. Following a break on February 26 for Mahashivratri, the BJP-led government will present the CAG re-

ports in the House on February 25. The session will commence with the appointment of the new Speaker and the swearing-in of MLAs. Lieutenant Governor V.K. Saxena will address the Assembly, followed by a motion of thanks. During AAP's tenure, the BJP had approached the court, demanding that the government table the CAG reports, alleging that the former AAP administration deliberately withheld them to conceal "corruption." BJP leader Vijender Gupta reaffirmed this stance in a post on X, stating that he met Chief Minister Rekha Gupta to discuss the agenda of the Assembly session. "The CAG reports will be tabled on February 25," he wrote. Gupta had earlier announced that he was nominated as the party's candidate for the Speaker's post. In the recently concluded Delhi Assembly elections, the BJP secured a majority by winning 48 of the 70 seats, while AAP managed to secure 22 seats.

## CJI, Solicitor General Teams to Face Off in a Cricket Pitch

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

A unique cricket face-off will unfold at Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium as teams led by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta clash in the inaugural match of the 1st SCAORA Cricket Premier League. The T20 tournament, organized by the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association (SCAORA), will commence under floodlights and be telecast live. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) have granted special permission for the match. Chief Justice Khanna's team will feature Supreme Court and Delhi High Court judges, including Justice Surya Kant, and will don jerseys similar to those of the Indian cricket team. The opposing SCAORA XI, led by Tushar Mehta, will consist of advocates on record, senior lawyers, and DDCA president Rohan Jaitley. Both the CJI XI and SCAORA XI will play only the inaugural match and will not compete in the rest of the league. The tournament will feature eight teams, captained by senior lawyers Dama Naidu, PB Suresh, Sajan Poovayya, Devadatt Kamat, Buddy Ranganathan, Vikas Pahwa, Sitesh Mukherjee, and Chinmoy Sharma, with players exclusively from the legal fraternity. SCAORA Vice President Amit Sharma noted that this tournament follows last year's international legal conference in Goa. "In the future, events like lectures by Supreme Court judges will be organized for advocates on record," he said, crediting SCAORA Secretary Nikhil Jain and Assistant Secretary Kaustubh Shukla for their efforts in making the league a reality.



## Signboards of Akbar, Humayun Road defaced in Delhi



**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

Signboards at Akbar Road and Humayun Road in Delhi were blackened and covered with posters of Chhatrapati Shivaji, allegedly by a group of 'Chhaava' movie fans, police sources said on Saturday. The incident reportedly took place after a group watched the Vicky Kaushal-starrer Chhaava, a period drama based on the life of Maratha warrior king Chhatrapati Sambhaji. Videos circulating on social media show youth spraying black paint over the signboards and pasting images of Shivaji, the founder of the Maratha Empire. Authorities responded swiftly, deploying police teams and civic officials to clean the defaced boards. A police investigation is underway, with CCTV footage being reviewed to identify those involved in the act. Officials have assured that the situation is being closely monitored to prevent further vandalism and maintain law and order.

## Indian Army Invites Applications for Short Service Commission, Deadline March 15

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

The Indian Army has opened online applications for the Short Service Commission (SSC) under the NCC Special Entry Scheme. Unmarried male and female candidates, including Wards of Battle Casualties of Indian Army personnel, can apply. The deadline for submissions is March 15, 2025.

### Eligibility Criteria

**Age Limit:** 19 to 25 years as of July 1, 2025 (Born between July 2, 2000, and July 1, 2006).

**Educational Qualification:** Minimum 50% marks in a recognized degree course. Final-year students must have secured at least 50% in previous years.

**NCC Service:** Minimum two/three years in NCC Senior Division/Wing. Vacancies

**NCC Men:** 70 posts (63 General, 7 for Wards of Battle Casualties).

**NCC Women:** 6 posts (5 General, 1 for Wards of Battle Casualties).

### Training & Terms

**Duration:** 49 weeks at Officers Training Academy (OTA), Chennai.

**Conditions:** Candidates cannot marry during training or live with parents/guardians.

**Training Cost:** ₹16,260 per week (as of 2023) if withdrawn for non-medical reasons.

Applications are accepted only at [www.joinindianarmy.nic.in](http://www.joinindianarmy.nic.in).





## 2 Days After CM Rekha's Oath, Atishi's "Failed Poll Promises" Charge

- Atishi questions BJP over the delay in the ₹2,500 aid scheme.
- Demands a meeting with CM Gupta to discuss implementation.
- Calls out BJP for not fulfilling Modi's "guarantee" to women.



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Atishi has criticized the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Delhi for failing to pass the promised ₹2,500 monthly aid scheme for women in its first cabinet meeting. In a letter to newly sworn-in Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Atishi demanded a meeting to discuss the scheme's implementation. Atishi reminded CM Gupta that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had assured women during an election rally on January 31 that the scheme would be approved in the first cabinet meeting. However, despite the meeting on February 20, no decision was made. At a press conference, Atishi displayed BJP's campaign posters and asked, "Was this just an election gimmick?" She reminded that both

Modi and BJP chief JP Nadda had assured that the funds would reach women by March 8. The BJP's first cabinet meeting focused on implementing the Ayushman Bharat health scheme, discussing the Mahila Samridhi Yojana, and tabling 14 pending CAG reports. However, the women's aid scheme was not addressed. AAP has vowed to hold the BJP accountable for its poll promises. Atishi dismissed the focus on CAG reports as a diversion from unfulfilled commitments. Rekha Gupta was sworn in as CM on February 20, with six MLAs in her cabinet. The BJP won 48 out of 70 seats in the February 5 elections, ending AAP's rule in Delhi.

## Was Doing Good Job, But...

Anna Hazare On Arvind Kejriwal's Poll Defeat

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Veteran activist Anna Hazare has said that Arvind Kejriwal was doing a "good job" as Delhi Chief Minister but lost public support after opening liquor vends, which ultimately led to his party's electoral defeat.



Hazare, whose anti-corruption movement in 2011 played a key role in the formation of AAP, stated that Kejriwal should have set an example before society but "went astray." He also praised Rekha Gupta, the new Chief Minister of Delhi, calling her election a moment of pride and attributing her victory to her "pure thoughts and deeds." "The earlier CM (Kejriwal) was doing a good job and became Delhi chief minister thrice. I did not speak anything against him as he was doing a good job. But then, he slowly started opening liquor vends and issuing licenses. Then I got upset," Hazare told reporters, referring to the controversial excise policy introduced by the AAP government. Hazare, known for his strong opposition to al-

cohol consumption, had earlier criticized the excise policy, which became a major political and legal issue. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) have alleged that irregularities were committed in modifying the 2021-22 Delhi excise policy, leading to undue benefits for license holders. The policy was later scrapped. Kejriwal, once a close associate of Hazare during the anti-corruption movement, parted ways with the activist after forming AAP in 2012. The party faced a major setback in the recent Delhi elections, with the BJP ousting AAP from power and Kejriwal losing his own seat.

## Delhi L-G appoints Arvinder Singh Lovely as pro-tem Speaker

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Vinai Kumar Saxena has appointed Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Arvinder Singh Lovely as the pro-tem Speaker of the Delhi Assembly. The appointment comes ahead of the first session of the newly elected Assembly, set to begin on February 24.



The pro-tem Speaker is responsible for conducting House proceedings until a full-time Speaker is elected. The oath-taking ceremony for the newly elected MLAs is scheduled for 11 AM on February 24, followed by the election of the Speaker at 2 PM. BJP MLA Vijender Gupta is the frontrunner for the Speaker's post, according to reports.

The BJP recently returned to power in Delhi after more than 26 years, forming the government following its victory in the Assembly elections. Rekha Gupta

was sworn in as the Chief Minister at a grand ceremony held at Ramlila Maidan. Alongside her, six ministers also took the oath of office—Parvesh Verma, Ashish Sood, Manjinder Singh Sirsa, Kapil Mishra, Ravinder Indraj Singh, and Pankaj Singh. The first session of the Assembly will witness key developments, including the administration of oaths to MLAs and the election of the Speaker. With the BJP in a

## AAP minister led 'non-existent' department for 20 months

Netizens say 'elect a clown, expect a circus'

TPN Correspondent | Punjab

Punjab minister Kuldeep Singh Dhaliwal has been removed from the 'non-existent' Department of Administrative Reforms after it was discovered that he had been heading the department for over 20 months without any staff or meetings. The revelation has sparked sharp criticism against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, with netizens mocking the oversight.



According to a Punjab government Gazette notification issued on February 21, 2025, Dhaliwal will now hold only the NRI Affairs portfolio. The

notification clarified that the Department of Administrative Reforms, which was previously assigned to him, does not exist.

Reports suggest that for nearly two years, no staff was assigned to the department, nor were any official meet-

ings held, raising questions about the functioning of the state government under Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann. The blunder has ignited a social media storm, with critics ridiculing the AAP leadership. One user on X remarked, "Elect a clown, expect a cir-

cus. This is how Punjab is being run under Bhagwant Mann." Another user posted, "Such an oversight not only reflects poorly on the government's internal processes but also undermines public trust. This is embarrassing and unacceptable." Dhaliwal, one of the senior-most ministers in the Punjab Cabinet, previously held the Agriculture and Farmers Welfare portfolio before being relieved of it in May 2023. He was then assigned the NRI Affairs Ministry along with the now-exposed 'non-existent' department.

## 'Sidelined' Shashi Tharoor seeks clarity on role in Congress, Rahul Gandhi gives no clear answer

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor reportedly raised concerns over his sidelining within the party during a recent meeting with Rahul Gandhi. Tharoor, who has been excluded from major Parliamentary debates and key party roles, sought clarity on his future in the party but received no definitive response.



According to reports, Tharoor expressed displeasure over his removal from the All India Professional Congress, an initiative he founded. He also questioned whether the party wanted him to focus on Kerala ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections and if he would be considered the chief ministerial candidate. However, Rahul Gandhi maintained that the Congress does not announce CM candidates before election results.

The meeting came amid tensions following Tharoor's recent

remarks praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit and lauding the LDF government's efforts in Kerala's industrial growth. These statements stirred unease within the Congress, as they appeared to diverge from the party's official stance. His article appreciating Kerala's entrepreneurship push was also met with backlash from state Congress leaders. Tharoor, however, downplayed any rift, stating, "I have never made any complaint against anyone." He declined to share further details about the closed-door discussion but confirmed that election strategies or leadership roles in Kerala were not discussed.

## 'Arvind Kejriwal wants to listen to Mann ki Baat'

IIT Kanpur's exam question goes viral

TPN Correspondent | Kanpur

An exam question at IIT Kanpur has sparked widespread attention on social media for its unusual reference to political figures Prime Minister Narendra Modi and former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The question, framed as part of an engineering test, creatively integrated Kejriwal's recent electoral defeat in Delhi and his financial struggles while setting up a technical problem.



The question humorously stated that Arvind Kejriwal, after his loss in the Delhi elections, wants to listen to PM Modi's 'Mann ki Baat' on Vividh Bharti at 105.4 MHz but needs to design a filter circuit to block interference from adjacent FM channels. Given his limited financial resources post-election, the question restricted his design options to a resistor, a variable inductor, and a variable capacitor. Students were then asked to help Kejriwal determine the quality factor (Q) of the filter and the required inductance and capacitance values. The exam question quickly went viral, with many reacting to the creative integration of real-world political context into an academic setting. Some praised the fac-

ulty's innovative approach, while others debated whether politics should be included in exam questions.

As discussions escalated, IIT Kanpur issued a clarification, stating that the reference to political figures was purely intended to make the topic more engaging. "This is a common practice employed by many teachers to keep students interested. The mention of the reference in the question was intended to make the topic more relevant," read an official statement from the institution. This incident has once again highlighted the unique teaching methods employed by some faculty members to blend current affairs with academic concepts, making technical subjects more interactive for students.

## Sarpanch's Husband Killed In Punjab Wedding Celebratory Firing



TPN Correspondent | Chandigarh

A wedding celebration in Punjab's Jalandhar took a tragic turn when Paramjit Singh, husband of a village sarpanch, was fatally shot during celebratory firing. The shocking incident, captured on camera, has gone viral on social media.

The video from the wedding in Goraya village shows a group of men dancing and showering money when one of them, in a rushed act, fires three shots. Singh, 45, who was crossing the group, was struck by a bullet and collapsed on the spot.

Initially, both the police and Singh's wife claimed he had suffered a heart attack, but the emergence of the video clearly showing him being shot has intensified the probe. Despite Punjab's strict gun laws banning weapons and celebratory firing at public events, no immediate action has been taken against the man responsible for the shooting.

Authorities are expected to take further action as the investigation progresses.





## UP Govt Gears Up for Maha Shivratri Bath at Maha Kumbh

TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj

The Uttar Pradesh government has intensified preparations for the Maha Shivratri bath, the last major holy dip of the ongoing Maha Kumbh, scheduled for February 26. In line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directives, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh and Director General of Police (DGP) Prashant Kumar visited Maha Kumbh Nagar to assess arrangements and provide necessary instructions.

DGP Prashant Kumar assured that comprehensive measures are in place for traffic control, crowd management, and ensuring a seamless experience for devotees. He emphasized that authorities are focused on preventing any disruptions and that security is being closely monitored.

The state government is also actively tracking social media to curb any attempts to spread misinformation or disturb the event. Over 50 FIRs have been registered against individuals attempting to incite unrest, with authorities vowing strict action.

During their visit, Chief Secretary Singh



and DGP Kumar inspected the Sangam Ghats by boat, reviewing cleanliness measures and issuing further directives. Singh highlighted that Maha Kumbh, which began on January 13, has seen an estimated 59 crore devotees so far, with over one crore visitors arriving daily in its final phase.

The grand congregation has drawn participation from saints, devotees, and dignitaries, including the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Governors, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, foreign diplomats, business leaders, and film personalities, all of whom have taken a sacred dip in the Sangam.

## Mizoram Plans To Amend Liquor Prohibition Law May Allow Sale Of Wine, Beer

TPN Correspondent | Aizawl

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Friday announced that his government is planning to amend the state's liquor prohibition law to allow the sale of wine and beer. However, he clarified that there is no intention to lift the ban on hard liquor.

During a discussion on the governor's address in the assembly, Lalduhoma stated that an amendment bill would be introduced during the ongoing budget session. "Our excise and narcotics minister will introduce an amendment bill to the existing prohibition law to regulate the sale of beer and wine during this session," he said. The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, enacted by the previous MNF government in 2019, imposed a blanket ban on the sale, manufacture, and consumption of liquor, including wine and beer, across the state, except in three autonomous district councils.

The move reversed the 2014 Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, which had permitted the sale of wine.

In September 2022, following widespread protests by grape growers, the government allowed the manufacture, sale, and export of wines made from locally grown grapes.

Mizoram has a long history of liquor regulations. The state's first wine shop opened in 1984, but after 11 years of relaxed and partial prohibition, the Congress government implemented The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995, enforcing a complete ban on liquor. This prohibition lasted until 2014 when the sale of wine was briefly reintroduced. The strict liquor ban in the Christian-majority state has often been linked to rising drug abuse among the youth. The proposed amendment is expected to spark debate on balancing prohibition with social and economic concerns.

## Assam Ends 90-Year-Old 'Namaz Break' Tradition in Assembly



TPN Correspondent | Guwahati

The Assam Legislative Assembly has officially discontinued the decades-old tradition of a two-hour break on Fridays to facilitate Muslim legislators in offering 'namaz'. The decision, taken in the last session of the House in August 2024, has been implemented for the first time in the ongoing budget session.

The move has drawn criticism from opposition parties, particularly the All India United Democratic Front

(AIUDF) and the Congress. AIUDF MLA Rafiqul Islam expressed dissatisfaction, stating that the decision was imposed purely on the strength of the ruling party's numbers. "There are about 30 Muslim MLAs in the assembly. We had expressed our views against the move. But they (the BJP) have the numbers and are imposing it on the basis of that," Islam said.

Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia of the Congress also raised

concerns, suggesting that arrangements could be made for Muslim MLAs to offer 'namaz' nearby. He pointed out that several legislators had to leave the House during important discussions to perform their Friday prayers. "Since it is a special prayer requirement only for Fridays, I think a provision can be made for it nearby," Saikia added.

The decision to discontinue the nearly 90-year-old practice was taken by the Rules Committee of the Assam Assembly, headed by Speaker Biswajit Daimary. According to the Speaker, the proposal was made in view of the secular nature of the Constitution and was unanimously approved by the committee. Daimary stated that the assembly must conduct its proceedings on Fridays like any other working day.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma welcomed the move, emphasizing that the practice was introduced in 1937 by Syed Saadulla of the Muslim League. He said that scrapping the break prioritized legislative productivity and removed another remnant of colonial-era traditions.

## Congress MLAs stage overnight protest in Rajasthan Assembly after 'Dadi' remark row

TPN Correspondent | Jaipur

Six Congress MLAs, suspended from the Rajasthan Assembly for the remainder of the Budget Session, staged an overnight protest inside the House after an uproar over a minister's reference to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi as "aapki dadi" (your grandmother).

The suspended legislators—Govind Singh Dotsara, Ramkesh Meena, Amin Kagzi, Zakir Hussain Gesawat, Hakeem Ali Khan, and Sanjay Kumar Jatav—were seen spending the night in the Well of the House on bedding, joined by other party colleagues in solidarity. The controversy erupted when Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Avinash Gehlot, while answering a question on hostels for working women, remarked, "In the 2023-24 budget also, like always, you named the scheme after your 'dadi' Indira Gandhi." The statement led to strong objections from Leader of Opposition Tika Ram Julliy, who demanded the remark be expunged. As Congress MLAs protested and moved toward the Speaker's chair, the House was adjourned multiple times before their suspension was announced. Parliamentary Affairs



Minister Jogaram Patel defended the remark, stating there was nothing unparliamentary about the term 'dadi'. However, government chief whip Jogeshwar Garg accused the Congress members of crossing limits and moved for their suspension, which was approved by the Speaker. Congress leaders condemned the suspensions, calling them an attempt to suppress opposition voices. Julliy stated, "Minister Avinash Gehlot made an indecent comment about Indira Gandhi ji, but our MLAs were sus-

ended instead. The BJP wants to run the House in a dictatorial manner."

Former Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot echoed the sentiment, accusing the BJP of following the Lok Sabha-Rajya Sabha pattern of suspending opposition members to avoid discussions.

"First, a BJP minister made an indecent comment, then our MLAs were suspended for protesting. This government has nothing to show for the past year, so they are diverting attention from real issues," he said.

## RG Kar Victim's Parents Still Await Death Certificate After Six Months

TPN Correspondent | Kolkata

Six months after the brutal rape and murder of a junior woman doctor at Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, her parents are yet to receive a copy of her death certificate, alleging that the hospital and Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) are passing the responsibility onto each other.

The victim's body was found inside the hospital's seminar hall on August 9 last year. Since then, her parents have been struggling to obtain the official death certificate. They claim that KMC authorities insist it is the hospital's duty to issue the certificate since the death occurred on the premises, while RG Kar officials argue that KMC must provide it if the deceased was not a patient.

Despite their repeated attempts, the parents say they have only seen mentions of the death certificate in court documents, as stated by a medical officer from RG Kar. They now question why the certificate, if it exists in legal records, has not been handed over to them.

Meanwhile, a special court in Kolkata, which recently convicted and sentenced civic volunteer Sanjay Roy for the crime, has directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to submit a fresh progress report on the case by February 24. Legal experts believe this report will focus on possible evidence tampering in the case.

The victim's family has accused the CBI of failing to provide regular updates on the investigation, prompting the special court to intervene.

## Rajasthan CM Receives Death Threat From Inmate

TPN Correspondent | Rajasthan

Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhanu Lal Sharma has received a death threat from an inmate at Dausa jail, raising serious concerns about security lapses within the prison. The call was traced to the jail, prompting an immediate investigation into how the prisoner accessed a mobile phone.

The accused, identified as Rinku alias Ranwa, is already in jail under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Police arrested him soon after the threat was detected. State Home Minister Jawahar Singh Bedham stated that Inspector General of Jails, Vikram Singh, has been assigned to probe the matter.

"In Dausa jail, an inmate jailed under the POCSO Act made a threat call to the control room yesterday. The police acted swiftly and arrested him. We have directed the Director General of Prisons to investigate how the criminal got access to

a phone," the minister said. Authorities are also investigating whether jail officials were involved. "Prima facie, it appears that another officer inside the jail may be complicit. Strict action will be taken to prevent such incidents in the future," Bedham added.

The incident follows a similar case in July last year when a death threat was issued to the Rajasthan CM from Shyala-was Jail in Dausa. At the time, police recovered nine mobile phones hidden inside the jail premises.

Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Lokesh Sonwal stated that a mobile phone and SIM card have been seized in the latest case, and an FIR has been registered. "A search operation was conducted involving ADM, SDM, and DIG officials," he said.

The investigation is ongoing, and authorities have assured strict measures to prevent future breaches of security inside jails.





## UP Govt Gears Up for Maha Shivratri Bath at Maha Kumbh

TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj

The Uttar Pradesh government has intensified preparations for the Maha Shivratri bath, the last major holy dip of the ongoing Maha Kumbh, scheduled for February 26. In line with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directives, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh and Director General of Police (DGP) Prashant Kumar visited Maha Kumbh Nagar to assess arrangements and provide necessary instructions.

DGP Prashant Kumar assured that comprehensive measures are in place for traffic control, crowd management, and ensuring a seamless experience for devotees. He emphasized that authorities are focused on preventing any disruptions and that security is being closely monitored.

The state government is also actively tracking social media to curb any attempts to spread misinformation or disturb the event. Over 50 FIRs have been registered against individuals attempting to incite unrest, with authorities vowing strict action.

During their visit, Chief Secretary Singh



and DGP Kumar inspected the Sangam Ghats by boat, reviewing cleanliness measures and issuing further directives. Singh highlighted that Maha Kumbh, which began on January 13, has seen an estimated 59 crore devotees so far, with over one crore visitors arriving daily in its final phase.

The grand congregation has drawn participation from saints, devotees, and dignitaries, including the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Governors, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, foreign diplomats, business leaders, and film personalities, all of whom have taken a sacred dip in the Sangam.

## Mizoram Plans To Amend Liquor Prohibition Law May Allow Sale Of Wine, Beer

TPN Correspondent | Aizawl

Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma on Friday announced that his government is planning to amend the state's liquor prohibition law to allow the sale of wine and beer. However, he clarified that there is no intention to lift the ban on hard liquor.

During a discussion on the governor's address in the assembly, Lalduhoma stated that an amendment bill would be introduced during the ongoing budget session. "Our excise and narcotics minister will introduce an amendment bill to the existing prohibition law to regulate the sale of beer and wine during this session," he said. The Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition) Act, enacted by the previous MNF government in 2019, imposed a blanket ban on the sale, manufacture, and consumption of liquor, including wine and beer, across the state, except in three autonomous district councils.

The move reversed the 2014 Mizoram Liquor (Prohibition & Control) Act, which had permitted the sale of wine.

In September 2022, following widespread protests by grape growers, the government allowed the manufacture, sale, and export of wines made from locally grown grapes.

Mizoram has a long history of liquor regulations. The state's first wine shop opened in 1984, but after 11 years of relaxed and partial prohibition, the Congress government implemented The Mizoram Liquor Total Prohibition Act, 1995, enforcing a complete ban on liquor. This prohibition lasted until 2014 when the sale of wine was briefly reintroduced. The strict liquor ban in the Christian-majority state has often been linked to rising drug abuse among the youth. The proposed amendment is expected to spark debate on balancing prohibition with social and economic concerns.

## Assam Ends 90-Year-Old 'Namaz Break' Tradition in Assembly



TPN Correspondent | Guwahati

The Assam Legislative Assembly has officially discontinued the decades-old tradition of a two-hour break on Fridays to facilitate Muslim legislators in offering 'namaz'. The decision, taken in the last session of the House in August 2024, has been implemented for the first time in the ongoing budget session.

The move has drawn criticism from opposition parties, particularly the All India United Democratic Front

(AIUFD) and the Congress. AIUFD MLA Rafiqul Islam expressed dissatisfaction, stating that the decision was imposed purely on the strength of the ruling party's numbers. "There are about 30 Muslim MLAs in the assembly. We had expressed our views against the move. But they (the BJP) have the numbers and are imposing it on the basis of that," Islam said.

Leader of Opposition Debabrata Saikia of the Congress also raised

concerns, suggesting that arrangements could be made for Muslim MLAs to offer 'namaz' nearby. He pointed out that several legislators had to leave the House during important discussions to perform their Friday prayers. "Since it is a special prayer requirement only for Fridays, I think a provision can be made for it nearby," Saikia added.

The decision to discontinue the nearly 90-year-old practice was taken by the Rules Committee of the Assam Assembly, headed by Speaker Biswajit Daimary. According to the Speaker, the proposal was made in view of the secular nature of the Constitution and was unanimously approved by the committee. Daimary stated that the assembly must conduct its proceedings on Fridays like any other working day.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma welcomed the move, emphasizing that the practice was introduced in 1937 by Syed Saadulla of the Muslim League. He said that scrapping the break prioritized legislative productivity and removed another remnant of colonial-era traditions.

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The suspended legislators—Govind Singh Dotsara, Ramkesh Meena, Amin Kagzi, Zakir Hussain Gesawat, Hakeem Ali Khan, and Sanjay Kumar Jatav—were seen spending the night in the Well of the House on bedding, joined by other party colleagues in solidarity. The controversy erupted when Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Avinash Gehlot, while answering a question on hostels for working women, remarked, "In the 2023-24 budget also, like always, you named the scheme after your 'dadi' Indira Gandhi." The statement led to strong objections from Leader of Opposition Tika Ram Julliyal, who demanded the remark be expunged. As Congress MLAs protested and moved toward the Speaker's chair, the House was adjourned multiple times before their suspension was announced. Parliamentary Affairs



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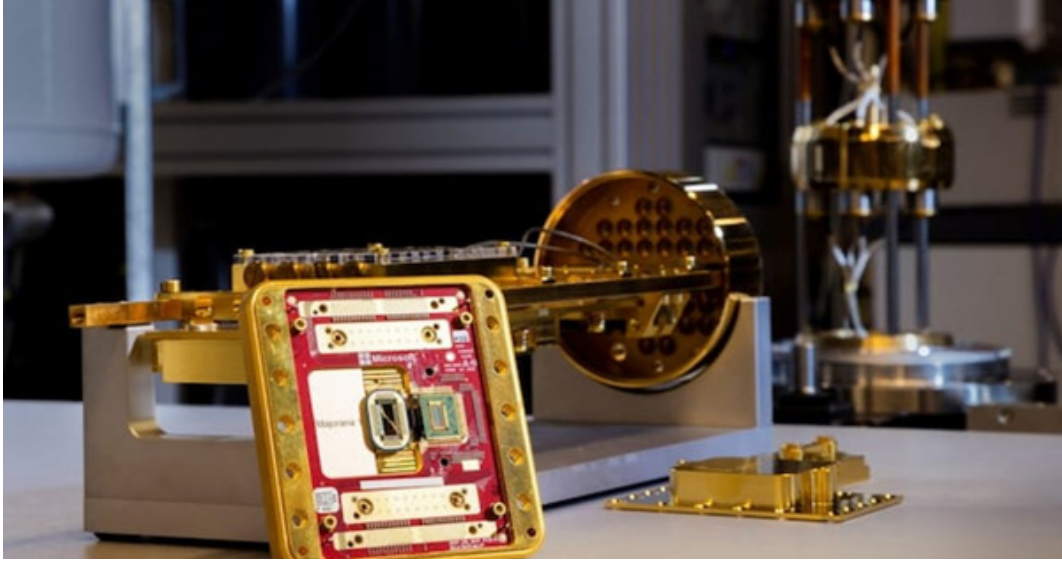
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## India's Quantum Leap: Harnessing AI and Quantum Computing for a Viksit Bharat



India stands at the threshold of a technological revolution that could redefine its future. With the advent of quantum computing and generative AI, India has a unique opportunity to leapfrog traditional technological progress, positioning itself at the global forefront.

Recent breakthroughs in quantum computing, such as Microsoft's unveiling of the Majorana 1 chip, have brought practical quantum computing closer than ever. Unlike traditional qubits, the topological qubits in Majorana 1 are stable, offering the potential for solving problems once thought unsolvable, such as climate change, drug discovery, and materials science. Meanwhile, advancements in generative AI, like xAI's Grok 3, are pushing the boundaries of creativity, problem-solving, and automation. These technologies, while transformative, also introduce challenges, including ethical concerns and potential job displacement. However, for India, they present a powerful opportunity to take a giant leap in technology.

India's strong public digital infrastructure, coupled with a thriving startup ecosystem and a growing tech workforce, gives it a unique edge to integrate quantum computing and AI directly into its governance and economic systems. Initiatives like the National Quantum Mission (NQM) launched in 2023 aim to develop quantum technologies, with a focus on applications for India's needs—opti-

mizing transportation, energy grids, and agriculture.

In AI, India's vast population generates massive datasets that can be leveraged to develop region-specific solutions. From translating educational content into multiple languages to improving monsoon predictions and AI-driven healthcare, India is well-positioned to use generative AI for social advancement and economic growth.

To fully capitalize on this opportunity, India must invest in indigenous quantum and AI ecosystems. This includes establishing quantum computing infrastructure, expanding AI supercomputing centers, and developing in-house AI models and chips to reduce reliance on foreign technologies. The government's Skill India initiative must also be aligned to create a workforce of quantum and AI specialists.

Moreover, fostering deep-tech startups is crucial. By offering incentives such as tax breaks and venture capital, India can fuel innovation in quantum and AI sectors. Strategic policy frameworks must also address AI governance, ensuring ethical use while mitigating risks like deepfakes. By embracing these technologies and building in-house capabilities, India can not only accelerate its journey to a Viksit Bharat but also become a global leader in the digital age. The future is quantum, the future is AI, and the future is India's to seize.



## BJP Ready to Accelerate After Lok Sabha Speedbreaker

The BJP's victories in Haryana, Maharashtra, and Delhi have not only reinforced its political dominance but also revived its confidence following a minor setback in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Despite losing around 30 seats, which some saw as a major blow, the party has come back stronger, proving the previous defeat was just a temporary hurdle.

Just months after the 2024 Lok Sabha results, many Congress leaders and regional figures expressed optimism about the BJP's challenges ahead, especially with Rahul Gandhi positioning himself to lead the Opposition. However, those prospects now seem distant, as the BJP has firmly consolidated its position, especially in states like Haryana, Maharashtra, and Delhi, where it was previously considered to have lost its grip. The Delhi win, in particular, was seen as impossible due to the Aam Aadmi Party's dominance, but BJP's resilient strategy led to an unexpected

victory.

The BJP's success can be attributed to a careful and continuous course correction. Campaigning was adjusted with a focus on smaller, targeted meetings rather than large rallies, reaching out to voters through door-to-door interactions. The party's messaging was refined, with a strong emphasis on achievements and promises, avoiding any overstatements about possible outcomes.

One crucial aspect of the BJP's campaign strategy was its ability to neutralize the 'Constitution in danger' narrative that had caused trouble during the Lok Sabha elections. Leaders like Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Shah made concerted efforts to dispel fears about reservations and highlighted the government's welfare steps for marginalized sections of society. These efforts were reinforced by the extensive outreach from RSS workers, who ensured that no misconceptions about the party's

stance gained ground.

The BJP's alliance, initially viewed with skepticism due to its dependence on regional leaders, has now become more stable. Issues like the Waqf Amendment have been handled diplomatically, allowing the central government to function smoothly despite coalition dynamics.

Behind the scenes, the RSS played a pivotal role in strengthening the BJP's ground game, providing real-time feedback and strategizing minute-to-minute adjustments. The RSS's intense outreach, particularly through data-driven campaigns and local gatherings, ensured that every voter received key messages directly related to their concerns.

With momentum on its side, the BJP is now looking to capitalize on this success in upcoming state elections, especially in Bihar and West Bengal, where workers are rejuvenated and ready to continue the party's progress.

## A Window of Opportunity: President's Rule and the Future of Manipur

The imposition of President's Rule in Manipur marks a critical juncture in the state's turbulent political and ethnic landscape. With Chief Minister Biren Singh's resignation on February 9, 2025, amid political instability and escalating ethnic violence, the state has entered a period of governance under direct control of the Union Government. This presents a crucial opportunity for the BJP and the Centre to address the underlying causes of the ongoing conflict and lay the foundation for lasting peace between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities.

The violence in Manipur has claimed over 200 lives and displaced more than 50,000 people. The need for constructive intervention has never been more urgent. The BJP, having failed to form a consensus on a successor to Biren Singh, opted for President's Rule to stabilize the situation and avoid a constitutional crisis. The central leadership now has a window to take the necessary steps to address ethnic tensions and create a sustainable political environment for the state.

One of the first priorities for the Centre is the role of Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla. With his neutral stance—neither aligned with the Meitei nor the Kuki-Zo community—Bhalla's leadership can facilitate dialogue and reconciliation between these divided groups. His efforts thus far, including visiting relief camps and engaging with displaced people, set the tone for a more inclusive approach to restoring peace. However, while President's Rule has garnered support from Kuki-Zo groups, it has been met with opposition from



the Congress and Meitei organizations. The Centre must, therefore, balance these diverse views and ensure a fair and comprehensive peace process. To this end, the BJP must take proactive steps. First, it needs to re-engage with the Kuki-Zo legislators who have distanced themselves from the party

since the ethnic violence erupted. Establishing communication between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo factions within the party is critical for fostering unity. A new peace committee, inclusive of all stakeholders, must also be formed to facilitate meaningful dialogue. Previous efforts have faltered due to lack of

action and resistance from influential groups like Kuki-Inpi and COCOMI. A more robust and dynamic approach is required this time.

The BJP's next chief ministerial candidate will likely be from the Meitei community, which dominates the state assembly. However, the party must en-

sure that the selected leader represents all communities and is capable of making decisions in the broader interest of the state, fostering a sense of inclusivity. Additionally, the BJP needs to strengthen its relationships with current allies like the Naga People's Front (NPF) and the National People's Party (NPP) to ensure a stable and united government.

Moreover, extending an olive branch to the Kuki People's Alliance (KPA), which had withdrawn support from the BJP due to disagreements with Biren Singh, could signal a commitment to reconciliation. Restoring ties with this faction will send a positive message to the Kuki-Zo community and help heal the rift that has deepened over the past year. Finally, the Centre must take a firm stance against militant groups from both the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities. The recent crackdown on militants is a step in the right direction, but it must be sustained without compromise. The continued dismantling of armed groups will play a pivotal role in ensuring long-term peace and stability in Manipur.

In conclusion, President's Rule in Manipur offers a temporary yet crucial opportunity for the BJP and the Centre to address the root causes of the state's ethnic strife. By taking strategic actions—engaging in dialogue, restoring trust, and fostering political consensus—the BJP can pave the way for a more peaceful and stable future for Manipur. The next few months are critical, and how the Centre handles this period will shape the state's trajectory for years to come.



# Trump's third attack on \$21mn USAID

## 'Why are we caring about India's turnout?'

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Former US President Donald Trump has once again criticized the \$21 million USAID funding for 'voter turnout' in India, questioning why American taxpayers' money is being spent on foreign elections. His remarks, made during an address to US governors, mark the third time he has publicly raised concerns over the issue.

"USD 21 million going to my friend Prime Minister Modi in India for voter turnout. Why are we caring about India's turnout? What about us? I want voter turnout too," Trump said in a video shared by National Desk. He also took aim at another USAID allocation, stating, "\$29 million to strengthen the political landscape in Bangladesh went to a firm that nobody ever heard of."

On Friday, Trump went further, calling the funding a "kickback scheme." He said, "Why do we need to spend \$21 million for voter turnout in India? I guess they were trying to get somebody else elected." He also compared the controversy to allegations of Russian interference in US elections, adding, "When we hear that Russia spent about two thousand dollars on internet ads here, it was a big deal. But this is a total breakthrough."



India's response

The Indian government has taken note of Trump's statements, with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) confirming that the matter is under review. MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "Relevant departments and authorities are looking into the information put out by the American ad-

ministration regarding certain US activities and funding. These are obviously very deeply troubling."

The issue has raised concerns about the transparency of foreign funding in political processes, with both Trump's campaign and Indian authorities closely monitoring further developments.

# Drive Against Illegal Poppy Cultivation in Arunachal Faces Death Threats

TPN Correspondent | Arunachal Pradesh

A large-scale crackdown on illegal poppy cultivation in Arunachal Pradesh has uncovered direct links between narcotics and insurgency for the first time. Led by the Central Bureau of Narcotics (CBN) and supported by security forces and the state government, the operation targeted poppy plantations across multiple districts, including Lohit, Namsai, and Changlang.

Over 6,000 hectares of poppy fields were destroyed in the past two months, despite insurgent groups issuing death threats to officials and workers involved in the operation. The estimated value of the destroyed poppy plantations exceeds ₹500 crore.

Insurgent outfits such as the NSCN (K-YA) and ULFA (Independent) reportedly threatened those participating in the drive, warning them to withdraw or face fatal consequences. These threats led to a shortage of workers, affecting the operation's overall progress.

Despite these challenges, security forces, particularly the Assam Rifles, played a crucial role in ensuring the operation proceeded as planned. However, due to bad weather and other logistical issues, officials were able to achieve only 60% of their initial target.



# Over 150 Nepalese Students Leave Odisha University After Student's Death

TPN Correspondent | Nepal

Days after the alleged suicide of a Nepalese student at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) in Odisha, 159 Nepalese students have returned home, citing mistreatment and safety concerns. The students crossed the Raxaul border, according to Assistant Chief District Officer of Parsa, Suman Kumar Karki.

Prakriti Lamsal, a 20-year-old third-year B-Tech (Computer Science) student, was found dead in her hostel room on February 16. Following her death, unrest broke out on campus, and Nepalese students claimed they were forced to vacate the hostel under harsh conditions.

A group of students who returned to Nepal alleged they were subjected to "inhuman treatment" by university staff and security guards.

"We were beaten up in the presence of university teachers and forced to leave immediately," they said, adding that they no longer felt safe to continue their studies at KIIT despite reassurances from the administration. The students have demanded a thorough investigation into Lamsal's death and justice for those mistreated. Protests were held in Birgunj and Bhairahawa, Lamsal's home district, calling for accountability.

Nepal's Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba confirmed that the issue had been taken up diplomatically. She stated that after discussions with Odisha Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj, the Odisha government formed a high-level inquiry committee to ensure a fair investigation. The college administration has since apologized and taken action against staff involved in the alleged mistreatment.

# BBC World Service India Fined ₹3.44 Crore For Foreign Exchange Violation

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has imposed a penalty of ₹3.44 crore on BBC World Service India for allegedly violating foreign direct investment (FDI) regulations. The agency has also fined three of its directors ₹1.14 crore each under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

A BBC spokesperson, responding to PTI, stated that neither the company nor its directors had received any adjudication order from the ED. "The BBC is committed to operating within the rules of all countries we are based in, including India. We will carefully review any order when it is received and consider next steps as appropriate," the spokesperson added.

The adjudication follows a show-cause notice issued on August 4, 2023, to BBC WS India, its three directors, and the finance head for alleged violations. The ED's FEMA probe was initiated a few months after an Income Tax survey at the BBC's Delhi office in February 2023.

According to sources, BBC WS India, a 100% FDI company, was engaged in streaming news and current affairs on digital media but did not comply with the FDI limit of 26% mandated by the Indian government under the Press Note 4 of 2019 issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry



and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

The total penalty includes ₹5,000 per day for non-compliance beyond October 15, 2021. The three fined directors—Giles Antony Hunt, Indu Shekhar Sinha, and Paul Michael Gibbons—were allegedly responsible for overseeing operations during the period of violation.

Following the 2023 Income Tax survey, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) stated that the income and profits reported by BBC's entities were "not commensurate" with their Indian operations and that certain foreign remittances had not been taxed.

The BBC had then maintained that it would continue cooperating with authorities and hoped for a resolution soon.

# Bhutan PM Calls Modi 'Elder Brother, Mentor' at Leadership Conclave

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay on Friday praised Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling him an "elder brother" and "mentor" during his keynote address at the School of Ultimate Leadership (SOUL) conclave in New Delhi. Speaking in Hindi at several points, Tobgay's remarks received enthusiastic applause from the audience.

"Without a doubt, I see an image of an elder brother in you, who always guides me and helps me ('Nisandeh, aap mei ek bade bhai ki chhavi dekhta hun, jo sadaiv mera margdarshan karte hain, aur mujhe sahayta dete hain')," he said, addressing Modi directly. Tobgay lauded the SOUL initiative as a "brainchild of Modi," emphasizing that it reflected his dedication to nurturing leadership and empowering individuals to serve India.

He stated that he had come to the event not as a leader but as a student eager to learn. "Leadership is not about titles or positions; it is about vision, courage, and the ability to inspire change. It is about trans-



formation, about guiding society toward a more prosperous and peaceful future," Tobgay said.

He highlighted the role of great leaders in history, who have not only led nations but also inspired revolutions in thought and progress. "Aadarniya Pradhan Mantri, mere bade bhai,

aapne apni buddhimani, saahas aur karuna se bhare netritav se Bharat ko das hi varshon mein pragati ke path par agrasar kiya hai" (Hon'ble Prime Minister, my elder brother, with your wisdom, courage, and compassionate leadership, you have led India on the path of development in just ten years), he added.

# "Cheating Passengers": Shivraj Chouhan Slams Air India Over "Broken" Seat

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday criticized Air India for allotting him a "broken" seat during his flight from Bhopal to Delhi. The Minister alleged that despite the airline being aware of the seat's poor condition, it was still sold to passengers.

Chouhan, who was traveling to Delhi to inaugurate the "Kisan Mela" and attend meetings on natural farming, shared his experience on X. He stated that he was assigned seat 8C on Air India flight AI436, which was damaged and uncomfortable.

"When I asked the airline staff why the seat was broken, they admitted that the management had already been informed about it and that it should not have been sold," Chouhan wrote in Hindi. He further claimed that multiple seats on the flight were in a similar condition.

Despite being advised by co-passengers to switch to another seat, the former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister chose to complete his journey in the same seat, arguing that he did not want to inconvenience another passenger.

Expressing his disappointment, Chouhan remarked, "I thought Air India's service would improve after Tata took over, but I was mistaken." He also criticized the airline for



charging passengers full fare while offering defective seating, calling it "unethical" and equating it to "cheating passengers."

Air India responded to his complaint, apologizing for the inconvenience and assuring that the issue would be addressed to prevent such occurrences in the future. The airline also requested an opportunity to discuss the matter with Chouhan.



## India slams Turkish President's Kashmir remark



TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

India has strongly objected to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's remarks on Kashmir during his recent visit to Pakistan. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) called his comments "objectionable and unwarranted," reaffirming that Jammu and Kashmir remain an integral part of India.

MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal stated, "We reject such objectionable comments on matters that are internal to India. We have lodged a strong protest with the Turkish ambassador. Such unwarranted statements on India's territorial integrity and sovereignty are unacceptable."

India also criticized Pakistan's continued involvement in cross-border terrorism, suggesting that Erdogan should have instead condemned it rather than commenting on India's internal affairs. "No other country has any locus standi to comment on Jammu and Kashmir. It would have been more appropriate if Pakistan's policy of using cross-border terrorism against India, which remains the biggest threat to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, had been called out," the MEA said.

Erdogan's remarks, made during his two-day visit to Pakistan, called for resolving the Kashmir issue through UN resolutions and dialogue while expressing solidarity with the people of Kashmir. India's strong response underscores its firm stance against any external interference in its territorial matters.

# PM Modi to be guest of honour at Mauritius' National Day celebrations

TPN Correspondent | New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the 'Guest of Honour' at Mauritius' 57th National Day celebrations on March 12, as announced by Mauritian Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam. Modi is set to visit Port Louis on March 11-12, underscoring the deep ties between India and the island nation.

Addressing the Parliament, Ramgoolam expressed his delight over Modi accepting the invitation despite his packed diplomatic schedule, which recently included visits to Paris and the United States. "It is indeed a singular privilege for our country to host such a distinguished personality who is doing us this honour," he said.

Highlighting the historical and cultural ties between the two nations, Ramgoolam noted that Modi's visit reaffirms the enduring friendship between India and Mauritius. "The visit of Modi is a testimony to the close re-



lations between our two nations," he added.

Mauritius marks its National Day on March 12, commemorating its independence from British rule in 1968 and its transition to a republic within the Commonwealth in 1992.

India and Mauritius share strong

diplomatic and cultural relations, with nearly 70% of Mauritius' 1.2 million population being of Indian origin. Modi had earlier congratulated Ramgoolam on his electoral victory in November 2024, emphasizing his commitment to strengthening their "special and unique partnership."

## Hamas completes first phase of hostage release

TPN Correspondent | Tel Aviv

Hamas released six Israeli hostages from Gaza on Saturday, marking the completion of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement that began last month. However, uncertainty looms over the next stage of the truce as negotiations continue. Among those released, Tal Shoham and Avera Mengistu were handed over to the Israeli military by the Red Cross in Rafah and have crossed into Israel, according to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). Three others—Omer Shem Tov, Eliya Cohen, and Omer Wenkert—were transferred to the Red Cross in Nuseirat, while Hisham al-Sayed was

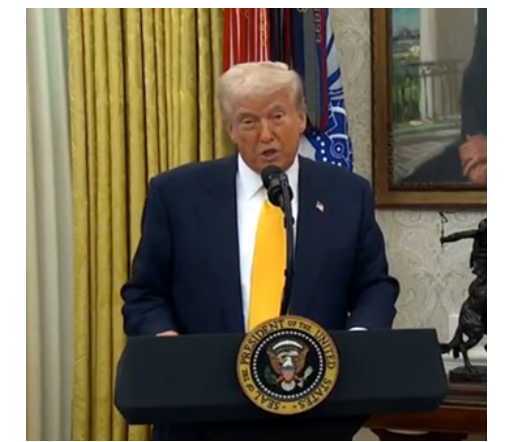


released at a separate site in Gaza City.

These six individuals are the final living hostages whose release was agreed upon during last month's negotiations in Qatar. Following this exchange, Hamas and its allies continue

to hold 63 Israeli hostages in Gaza, at least 32 of whom are believed to be deceased, as per the Israeli government. Hamas stated that it expects Israel to release 602 Palestinian prisoners and detainees as part of the agreement. Among them, 50 have been sentenced to life imprisonment, 60 are serving long sentences, and 445 were detained in Gaza since October 7, 2023.

While the current phase has concluded, Hamas has signaled readiness to release all remaining Israeli hostages in a single exchange if Israel agrees to withdraw its troops from Gaza as part of the next ceasefire stage.



## Trump Announces Reciprocal Tariffs on India and China

TPN Correspondent | Washington DC

Former US President Donald Trump has announced plans to impose reciprocal tariffs on countries like India and China, stating that the United States will match the tariffs these nations impose on American goods. "We will soon impose reciprocal tariffs—they charge us, we charge them. Whatever a company or a country, such as India or China, charges, we want to be fair; hence, reciprocal," Trump said during a press conference on Friday. He added that the US was prepared to take this step earlier but was interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before his recent bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Trump had criticized India's tariff structure, calling it the "highest" and describing the country as a difficult place to conduct business. He reiterated these concerns when discussing Tesla CEO Elon Musk's meeting with PM Modi. "India is a very hard place to do business because of the tariffs. They have the highest tariffs... It's a hard place to do business," he remarked.

Trump also referenced India's past trade policies, citing the example of Harley-Davidson motorcycles, which faced high import duties, forcing the company to establish manufacturing units in India. "India charges tremendous tariffs. I remember when Harley-Davidson couldn't sell their motorbikes in India because the tax was so high. Harley was forced to build," he said, according to US Network Pool via Reuters.

His comments reflect long-standing concerns about India's trade practices, which have been a point of contention in US-India economic relations.



## Kash Patel Sworn In as FBI Director, Takes Oath on Bhagavad Gita

TPN Correspondent | Washington DC

Indian-American Kash Patel has been sworn in as the ninth Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), taking his oath on the Bhagavad Gita. Patel, confirmed by the US Senate, succeeds Christopher Wray in leading the agency.

The ceremony took place at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, where US Attorney General Pam Bondi administered the oath. Patel's family and girlfriend stood beside him, with other relatives seated in the front row.

Following the oath, Patel spoke about his journey, calling it a testament to the American dream. "Anyone who thinks the American dream is dead, look right here. You are talking to a first-generation Indian who is about to lead the law enforcement agency of the greatest nation on earth," he said. He also promised accountability within the FBI, both internally and externally.

US President Donald Trump praised Patel's appointment, calling him

"tough and strong" and highlighting the respect he commands among FBI agents. "He will go down as the best ever at that position," Trump said. He added that Patel's approval was easier than expected, citing strong endorsements, including one from former congressman Trey Gowdy. The White House welcomed Patel's confirmation, stating that it aligns with Trump's agenda to restore integrity and uphold the rule of law. In a post on X, the White House wrote, "@FBI Director Kash Patel's confirmation as FBI Director is a crucial step in executing President Trump's agenda to restore integrity and uphold the rule of law."

Patel, a close ally of Trump, expressed gratitude for the support of the President and Attorney General Bondi, vowing to rebuild the FBI as a "transparent, accountable, and committed" agency.

His nomination faced opposition from Republican Senators Lisa Murkowski and Susan Collins, but he secured confirmation with a narrow 51-49 vote, as all Senate Democrats voted against him.

## Germany's Gen Z Tilts Right as Nation Prepares for Sunday Vote



TPN Correspondent | Berlin

As Germany approaches its national election this Sunday, a notable shift is underway among Generation Z voters, born between 1997 and 2012, who are increasingly favoring right-of-center parties. Once staunch supporters of environmental and social justice causes, young Germans are now prioritizing immigration, a faltering economy, and the fallout from the Ukraine war, marking a dramatic departure from their 2021 preferences.

Germany's right-wing political spectrum includes the moderate CDU/CSU coalition, currently the second-largest party with strongholds in the west, and the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which is gaining traction, particularly in the east. In last year's eastern regional elections, the AfD saw significant support from 18- to 24-year-olds, outpacing the Greens, according to polling institute infratest dimap. The CDU/CSU, focusing on immigration and economic stability, topped the youth vote in the 2024 European elections, with the AfD close behind.

This shift contrasts sharply with 2021, when the Greens, bolstered by the Fridays for Future movement, led among young voters with their green energy and multicultural agenda. However, backlash against these policies has eroded their support. Unlike older generations tied to party loyalty, Gen Z voters are pragmatic, seeking solutions to immediate concerns. Analysts note that this cohort, distanced from World War II's legacy, views the AfD's rise with less apprehension than their predecessors.

Social media, particularly TikTok, has amplified this trend, with both the AfD and far-left Die Linke leveraging platforms to polarize and mobilize young voters. Recent surveys underscore this rightward lean, though 30% of all voters remain undecided, potentially deciding the election's outcome. As Europe tilts right, immigration remains a flashpoint, challenging left-leaning parties' liberal stance. With the CDU/CSU and AfD capitalizing on these shifts, Germany's political landscape faces a transformative moment this weekend.

## New Bat Coronavirus Found in China Scientists Assess Human Transmission Risk

TPN Correspondent | Beijing

A new bat coronavirus, HKU5-CoV-2, has been discovered in China, raising concerns about its potential to infect humans. The virus, identified by a team of virologists led by Shi Zhengli, shares similarities with SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the South China Morning Post (SCMP), HKU5-CoV-2 belongs to the merbecovirus subgenus, which also includes the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) virus. The researchers found that it can bind to human ACE2 receptors, a key mechanism used by SARS-CoV-2 to infect human cells.

Lab tests revealed that the virus could infect human cell cultures in mini-organ models, suggesting a potential zoonotic risk. The study, published in Newsweek, stated that "bat merbecoviruses, which are phylogenetically related to MERS-CoV, pose a high risk of spillover to humans, either through direct transmission or facilitated by intermediate hosts." However, it emphasized that the possibility of human transmission "remains to be investigated."

Despite the discovery, experts caution against panic. Dr. Michael Osterholm, an infectious disease expert at the University of Minnesota, called concerns about another pandemic "overblown," citing increased immunity in the population against SARS-like viruses since 2019.





## Ex-RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das Appointed Principal Secretary to PM

**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**  
Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has been appointed as the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, according to a government notification issued on Saturday. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) confirmed that Das' tenure will be co-terminus with the term of the Prime Minister or until further orders, whichever is earlier. His appointment comes as a significant move, given his vast experience in economic policy and governance.

Das, who served as RBI Governor for six years since December 2018,

played a crucial role in steering India's financial policies, particularly during the COVID-19 crisis. His tenure saw critical interventions in monetary policy, liquidity management, and regulatory reforms aimed at stabilizing the economy amid global and domestic challenges.

A 1980-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre, Das has held key positions in the central and state governments in areas including finance, taxation, infrastructure, and industry. His expertise in fiscal management and economic policy-making was instrumental in shap-

ing several government initiatives. In another key decision, the government extended the tenure of NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam by one year, starting from February 24, 2025. A 1987-batch IAS officer, Subrahmanyam was initially appointed for a two-year term in February 2023. His extension signals continuity in policy advisory at the country's premier think tank.

With Das assuming the crucial role of Principal Secretary to the PM, his experience in macroeconomic management and financial governance is expected to further strengthen the decision-making process at the highest level of government.

## CIE Automotive India Q4 2025 Profit Rises 9.49% YoY Despite Revenue Dip



**TPN Correspondent | Mumbai**

CIE Automotive India reported its Q4 2025 financial results on February 20, 2025, posting a profit of ₹184.98 crore, reflecting a 9.49% year-over-year (YoY) increase. However, revenue declined 5.82% YoY to ₹2,109.95 crore.

Quarter-over-quarter, revenue fell 1.16%, and profit declined 5.25%, indicating a slowdown. Operating income also witnessed a 12.9% q-o-q and 12.41% YoY decline. Meanwhile, Selling, General & Administrative expenses increased 0.67% q-o-q but dropped 1.42% YoY.

Earnings per share (EPS) for Q4 stood at ₹4.72, up 1.29% YoY, signaling financial stability despite revenue pressures.

CIE Automotive India's stock performance has been mixed, delivering a 0.27% return in the last week, but experiencing a 26.48% decline over six months and 10.6% year-to-date losses.

The company holds a market capitalization of ₹15,995.81 crore, with its stock trading between a 52-week high of ₹622.4 and a low of ₹405.3. Analysts maintain a 'Buy' recommendation, signaling long-term confidence despite near-term revenue challenges.

**Debock Industries Reports ₹0.2 Cr Loss in Q3 2025 as Revenue Plunges 97.01% YoY**  
Debock Industries announced its Q3 2025 financial results on February 21, 2025, re-

vealing a sharp revenue decline of 97.01% year-over-year (YoY), resulting in a ₹0.2 crore loss. In the same quarter last year, the company had posted a profit of ₹0.32 crore.

Compared to the previous quarter, revenue fell 95.74%, reflecting severe financial challenges. The company's operating income also suffered, dropping 107.84% quarter-over-quarter and 155.56% YoY, further highlighting its struggles in the current market.



Earnings per share (EPS) for Q3 stood at ₹-0.01, marking a 125% YoY decline, emphasizing the ongoing financial downturn.

Despite a 0.39% return in the last week, Debock Industries has seen a 63.87% decline in the past six months and a negative 17.83% year-to-date return.

The company currently holds a market capitalization of ₹41.99 crore, with its stock trading between a 52-week high of ₹9.6 and a low of ₹2.43.

## Zomato Faces Scrutiny Over Ticket Sales for Honey Singh's Concert



**TPN Correspondent | Mumbai**

The Maharashtra Cyber Cell is set to issue a show-cause notice to Zomato for allegedly selling tickets for singer Honey Singh's Millionaire India Tour concert without including buyers' names. The move comes as part of efforts to curb black marketing and ensure ticketing transparency for high-profile events.

Officials have raised concerns that omitting buyer names on tickets could lead to potential security risks and unauthorized resales. According to an NDTV report, the cyber cell has sought an explanation from Zomato regarding this practice and whether it violates ticketing regulations.

However, Zomato has denied the allegations, stating that it has not received any notice yet. In response to the controversy, a company spokesperson told Livemint, "This is not true. We have not received any notice yet. As and when we receive it, we will work with the authorities to demonstrate that our practices comply with applicable laws. We have always ad-

hered to the laws of the land and will continue to do so. Further, every M-ticket issued through the District app for music events or other experiences, including the Honey Singh concert, has consistently included the buyer's name." The scrutiny on Zomato follows the Maharashtra Cyber Cell's directive last year, instructing ticketing platforms like Zomato and BookMyShow to print buyers' names on tickets for major events to prevent resale at inflated prices.

Maharashtra Cyber Cell Chief Yashasvi Yadav highlighted the issue, stating, "A problem arose that many people held many tickets with themselves and resold them through social media platforms, with a manifold increase in ticket prices."

The Millionaire India Tour marks Honey Singh's major comeback, covering ten cities across India. The tour kicks off in Mumbai, with the first concert scheduled for February 22 at Nesco Pvt Ltd. Tickets for the event have been made available on Zomato and Insider.in.

**Coldplay Concert Black Marketing Controversy**

The show-cause notice against Zomato comes shortly after a similar controversy involving BookMyShow over the alleged black marketing of Coldplay concert tickets. The concert, held between January 19-21, 2025, faced backlash after fans accused BookMyShow of enabling third parties to resell tickets at exorbitant prices.

Advocate Amit Vyas filed a complaint against the platform, alleging that genuine users were logged out or blocked, allowing scalpers to sell tickets initially priced at ₹2,500 for up to ₹3 lakh.

BookMyShow had started selling Coldplay concert tickets on September 22, 2024, and they were sold out within minutes. The platform later issued warnings against illegitimate resellers.

With growing concerns over black marketing, the Maharashtra Cyber Cell is expected to tighten regulations further, ensuring that ticketing platforms comply with transparency measures.



**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

Tesla's much-anticipated entry into the Indian market is set to come with a hefty price tag, even if the government reduces import tariffs. A recent report by global capital market company CLSA has highlighted

that despite lower duties, Tesla's electric vehicles (EVs) will remain significantly more expensive than their domestic competitors, including Maruti Suzuki and Mahindra & Mahindra.

**Tesla's Expected Price in India**  
With the Indian government

## Tesla's Entry into India

### Higher Costs Expected Despite Lower Tariffs

considering slashing import duties to as low as 15-20%, the cheapest Tesla model is still expected to cost between ₹35 lakh and ₹40 lakh. Currently, the Tesla Model 3, which is the company's most affordable EV in the United States, is priced at approximately \$35,000 (around ₹30.4 lakh).

The CLSA report explains that, even with reduced tariffs, the cost will further increase due to additional charges such as road tax, insurance, and other levies. "With tariffs lowered to around 15-20% in India, along with other costs, the on-road price would be close to USD 40,000 (₹35-40 lakh)," the report states.

**Tesla vs Domestic EV Makers**  
Tesla's arrival in India has gen-

erated significant excitement, but the high pricing of its vehicles may prevent it from disrupting the domestic EV market. Competitors like Mahindra, Hyundai, and Maruti Suzuki already have established electric vehicle models at significantly lower price points.

These domestic players already dominate India's EV market with competitive pricing and established production lines. In contrast, Tesla's Model 3, even at its lowest projected price, remains at least 15-20% more expensive than these options.

According to industry experts, unless Tesla introduces a locally manufactured entry-level model under ₹25 lakh, it may struggle to gain a major

market share. The CLSA report also notes that concerns about Tesla's entry have already impacted Mahindra & Mahindra's stock prices.

**Tesla's India Plans & Hiring Process**

To overcome cost barriers, Tesla would need to establish a manufacturing facility in India, allowing the company to reduce its dependency on imports and make its vehicles more competitively priced. However, no official announcement has been made regarding setting up a local factory.

In a significant step towards its Indian entry, Tesla has begun hiring for key positions. On February 18, the company listed a job opening for the position of

Consumer Engagement Manager in Mumbai. This marks the beginning of Tesla's recruitment drive in India, with a total of 13 roles currently listed for the country.

Tesla is expected to launch its initial models in key metro cities like Delhi and Mumbai in the coming months. Industry analysts believe the EV giant will use these cities as testing grounds before expanding further. While Tesla's arrival is expected to bring innovation to India's electric vehicle market, its high price point and strong domestic competition could pose challenges to its success unless it commits to local production.



## NASA Lowers Risk of Asteroid 2024 YR4 Impact in 2032



**TPN Correspondent | Washington, D.C.** NASA has significantly reduced concerns regarding asteroid 2024 YR4, revising its estimated impact probability in 2032 from 1 in 32 to 1 in 360. The 55-meter-wide asteroid, initially considered the most hazardous object on NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object Studies (CNEOS) Sentry Risk Table, now has a 99.72% chance of completely missing Earth.

The reassessment follows new observational data collected between February 18 and February 20, allowing for refined calculations of the asteroid's trajectory. As a result, NASA has downgraded its classification to Level 1 on the Torino Scale, which assesses the threat posed by near-Earth objects. Richard Binzel, creator of the Torino Scale, indicated that further observations might move

2024 YR4 to Level 0, signifying no risk. Despite the risk reduction, asteroid 2024 YR4 remains the most concerning object on the Sentry Risk Table, followed by asteroid 1950 DA, which has a 0.039% chance of impacting Earth in the year 2880. Experts stress that continuous monitoring will provide greater clarity, especially when the asteroid makes another approach in 2028.

David Rankin, an astronomer with the Catalina Sky Survey, explained that small uncertainties in measurements could result in large trajectory shifts over time. However, he reassured that additional observations will likely continue lowering any remaining impact probabilities.

NASA also acknowledged a minor possibility that 2024 YR4 could collide with the Moon, though the likelihood remains extremely low. The asteroid is now moving away from Earth and will not be visible to ground-based telescopes until 2028, when further tracking will refine its projected path. Scientists remain confident that it will continue its orbit around the Sun without posing any danger to Earth.

## Amazonian Town Faces Crisis as Massive Sinkholes Expand



**TPN Correspondent | Buriticupu**

The city of Buriticupu in Brazil's northeastern Amazon is facing a growing crisis as massive sinkholes continue to expand, threatening the homes of at least 1,200 residents. The municipal government recently declared a state of emergency as the situation worsened.

In a decree issued earlier this month, officials warned that the sinkholes have been expanding "exponentially" in recent months, putting more homes at risk. Several buildings have already collapsed, and the danger continues to increase.

The issue has been unfolding for nearly 30 years due to heavy rains eroding sandy soils, worsened by deforestation and poorly planned construction. Known

as "voco-roca" in Brazil—a term of indigenous origin meaning "to tear the earth"—these sinkholes have now reached a critical stage.

The situation is particularly dire during the current rainy season, according to geographer Marcelino Farias of the Federal University of Maranhao. Long-time resident Antonia dos Anjos, 65, expressed her fears, saying, "There's this danger right in front of us, and nobody knows where the next hole will open up."

Buriticupu's secretary of public works, Lucas Conceicao, admitted that the municipality lacks the resources to handle the crisis. "The challenges range from stopping the erosion to relocating people from risk areas," he said.

## Boult Launches Mustang Q Headphones, Torq and Dyno TWS Earbuds in India



**TPN Correspondent | New Delhi**

Boult has introduced its latest range of audio products in India, unveiling the Mustang Q over-the-ear Bluetooth headphones alongside Mustang Torq and Mustang Dyno truly wireless (TWS) earbuds. Developed in collaboration with Ford's Mustang, these new offerings feature a design inspired by the iconic car, complete with Mustang-themed stripes, logos, and color shades.

The Boult Mustang Q is priced at ₹2,499 and comes in a single Blue variant. The Mustang Torq and Mustang Dyno earbuds are priced at ₹1,499 and ₹1,299, respectively. The Torq model is available in Silver and Yellow, while the Dyno variant comes in Grey. All three products are now available for purchase in India.

The Boult Mustang Q headphones boast

an IP67-rated water-resistant build and promise up to 70 hours of battery life on a single charge with active noise cancellation (ANC) enabled. They are equipped with 12mm drivers, environmental noise cancellation (ENC), and Bluetooth 5.4 connectivity, ensuring seamless compatibility with Android and iOS devices. The headphones also offer four EQ modes—Bass, Rock, Vocal, and Pop—and support dual-device pairing. A 10-minute charge provides up to 10 hours of playback time. The Mustang Torq and Mustang Dyno earbuds feature 13mm drivers for enhanced bass and support AAC and SBC codecs. With a quad-mic setup and ENC, these earbuds aim to provide clear call quality with minimal background noise. They also support AI voice assistants and

offer touch controls for managing calls and media playback.

For gamers, both models feature a low-latency mode with a 45ms response time, which can be activated through the Boult Amp app. They are IPX5-rated for sweat and water resistance, ensuring durability for workouts and outdoor use. With Bluetooth 5.4 connectivity, the earbuds support dual-device pairing and USB Type-C fast charging. The Mustang Torq offers up to 60 hours of total playback and provides two hours of listening time with just a 10-minute charge.

Boult's latest lineup aims to cater to music lovers and gamers alike, combining extended battery life, enhanced durability, and premium design inspired by Ford's Mustang.

## Digital photo snan at Maha Kumbh goes viral, sparks debate



**TPN Correspondent | Prayagraj**

A viral video from the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj has left the internet amused, showing a man offering a "digital photo snan" service for remote devotees. For a fee of ₹1,100, he claims to purify people's souls by immersing a photocopy of their picture in the sacred waters of the Triveni Sangam.

Identified as Deepak Goyal, the man in the video explains that devotees can send their photos via WhatsApp, which he prints and

dips in the holy river within 24 hours. The unusual service, which he refers to as his "startup," has sparked mixed reactions online.

The video, shared by Instagram user Akash Banerjee, has garnered over 4.3 million views and more than 124,000 likes. Many users mocked the idea, calling it "next-level AI" and comparing it to a "billion-dollar startup," while others criticized it as exploiting people's faith. "China has DeepSeek, so what we have is DeepSnaan," one user joked, while another

commented, "This is what Digital India looks like." Some, however, defended him, saying he was simply using an opportunity.

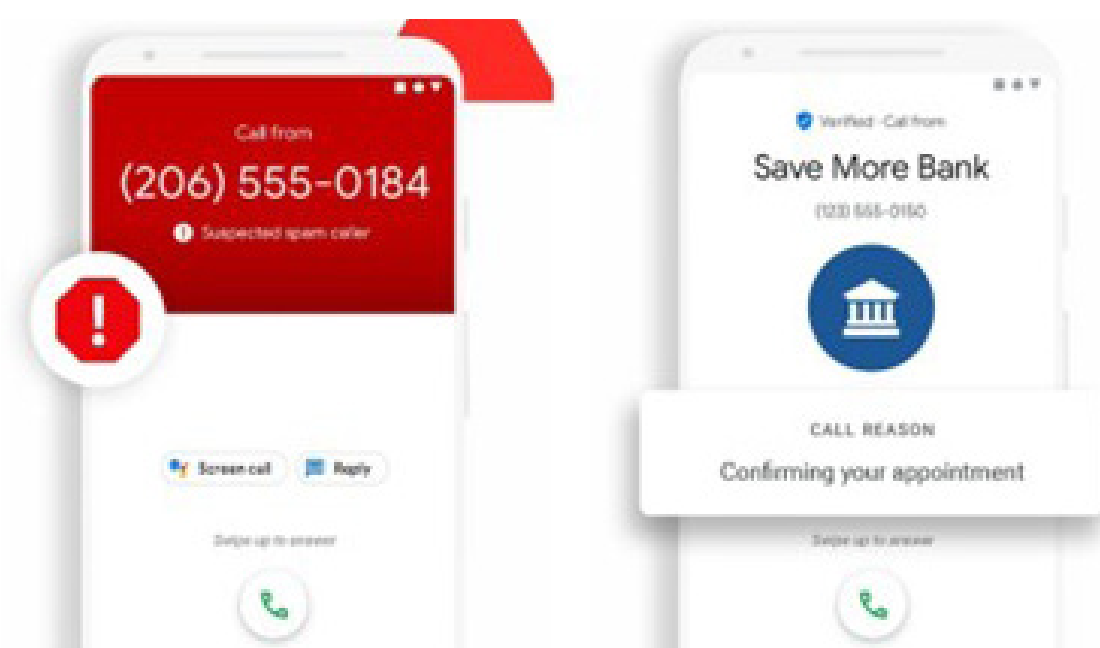
The Maha Kumbh Mela, which began on January 13 and will conclude on February 26, has drawn millions of devotees, including top political leaders, foreign dignitaries, industrialists, and film personalities. Many have participated in the ritual of taking a holy dip at the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati rivers.

## Google rolls out new filters for call history sorting on Android

Google is introducing a new feature in its Phone app that enhances call history sorting by categorizing calls based on type, such as spam, contacts, or unknown callers. This update, initially available to beta users, is now reportedly rolling out to all Android users.

According to a report by Android Authority, the new feature allows users to filter call history into categories like all, missed, contacts, spam, and non-spam. This makes it easier to find specific callers without scrolling through an extensive list of unrelated calls. However, users currently do not have the option to filter calls by incoming or outgoing status.

Call filters were first introduced with the 159.0.718038457-public-beta-pixel2024 update of the Phone app last month. At that time, it was limited to beta users with no official announcement on a public rollout. The latest report indicates that the feature is now becoming



widely available, though it may be a phased rollout controlled via a server-side update. As a result, some users, including Gadgets 360 staff members, have yet to see the feature on their devices, including Pixel phones.

Additional Spam Protection Features  
The new call sorting feature

adds to Google's ongoing efforts to improve spam protection and enhance user convenience. One of the key tools in this regard is the Call Screen feature available on Pixel devices. It acts as an intermediary, screening calls by asking the caller their name and reason for calling, then providing a transcript to the receiver

before they decide whether to answer.

Another notable feature is reverse lookup, which helps users identify unknown numbers and filter out spam calls. These measures are part of Google's broader strategy to reduce call spam and improve the overall calling experience for Android users.

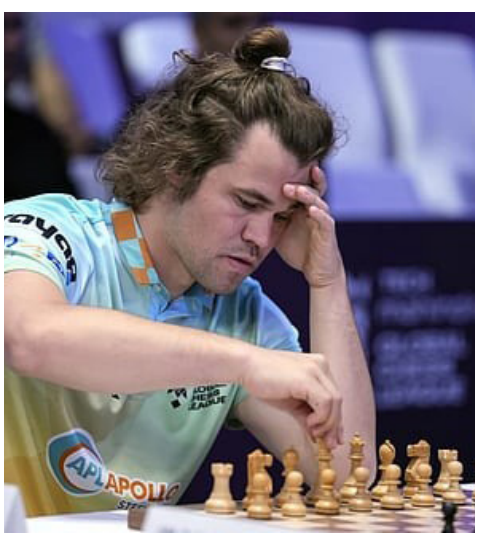


## Andreeva Becomes Youngest WTA 1000 Finalist



Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva made history by becoming the youngest player to reach the final of a WTA 1000 event. The 17-year-old defeated sixth-seeded Elena Rybakina 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 at the Dubai Championships. Andreeva, who trailed 1-3 in the third set, won the last five games to secure her spot in the final. "If I lose 6-0, 5-0 or win 7-5, 6-4, it doesn't matter. I just go for my shots and try to bring out my best level," Andreeva said after the match.

## Magnus Carlsen Auctions Jeans for Charity After Dress Code Dispute



Chess grandmaster Magnus Carlsen is turning his controversial jeans into a charitable contribution. The Norwegian player is auctioning off the pair of Italian luxury brand Corneliani jeans that led to a dress code dispute at the December World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships. After being fined \$200 for wearing the jeans, Carlsen quit the competition in protest, although the tournament's governing body later loosened the dress code.

Now, fans and collectors have the opportunity to own Carlsen's infamous size 32 regular fit jeans, which are being sold on eBay with proceeds going to Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. The auction, set to end on March 1, had already reached an offer of \$8,200 as of February 21.

The proceeds will support the charity's mission of mentoring youth, including funding chess clinics and community events. According to Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, chess has long been a favorite activity that helps participants develop critical thinking and life skills. Carlsen's jeans will now help inspire the next generation of young minds.

# India vs Pakistan: A Crucial Clash in ICC Champions Trophy 2025



The highly anticipated Pakistan vs India match in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 is set to take place on February 23 at Dubai International Stadium. This thrilling encounter will be pivotal for both teams, especially Pakistan, who must win to stay in contention for the title. India enters as the favorite, having won 8 of their last 12 ODIs against Pakistan in the past 15 years. Pakistan's squad includes key players like Babar Azam and Sha-

heen Shah Afridi, while India will rely on the form of Shubman Gill and Mohammed Shami. The match will start at 2:30 PM IST and is expected to feature a slow pitch, favoring spinners, with dew playing a significant role in the latter stages. The game will be broadcast live on Star Sports in India and PTV Sports in Pakistan, with online streaming available on JioHotstar and Myco. Fans can purchase tickets via the PCB website.

## Manu Bhaker to Lead 35-Member Indian Shooting Team at South America World Cups



ACE shooter Manu Bhaker will lead a 35-member Indian shooting team at the upcoming ISSF World Cups in South America, scheduled for April. The events will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina (April 1-11) and Lima, Peru (April 13-22). The squad includes several Paris Olympians, and Bhaker, recently awarded the Dhyana Chand Khel Ratna for her performance in Paris, will compete in the women's 10m air pistol and

25m pistol events. Prominent shooters such as Anish Bhanwala, Vijayveer Sidhu, Esha Singh, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, and Sift Kaur Samra will also be part of the team. Ahead of the World Cups, the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) will hold a training camp from March 14 at the Karni Singh Shooting Range, with expert coaches like Jaspal Rana and Jitu Rai.

## Manu Bhaker to Lead 35-Member Indian Shooting Team at South America World Cups



Mumbai Indians secured a thrilling four-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the Women's Premier League on Friday, with key contributions from skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Amanjot Kaur. RCB posted a competitive total of 167/7, thanks to Ellyse Perry's explosive 81 off 43 balls, which included 11 fours and two sixes. Despite being at 57/4 at one stage, Perry, along with Richa Ghosh (28) and Smriti Mandhana (26), helped RCB recover. In reply, Harmanpreet Kaur's 50 off

38 balls, along with Nat Sciver-Brunt's quick-fire 42 off 21 and Amanjot's unbeaten 34 off 27, guided Mumbai to victory with one ball to spare. Amanjot was named Player of the Match for her all-round performance, including 3/22 with the ball.

Brief Scores:

- Royal Challengers Bangalore: 167/7 (Perry 81, Ghosh 28; Amanjot 3/22)
- Mumbai Indians: 170/6 in 19.5 overs (Harmanpreet 50, Sciver-Brunt 42, Amanjot 34\*; Wareham 3/21, Garth 2/30)

## Ranji Trophy: Kerala Makes History, Set to Face Vidarbha in Final



Kerala has created history by reaching their first-ever Ranji Trophy final, setting up a thrilling title clash against Vidarbha. This milestone came after a dramatic two-run first-innings lead over Gujarat in the semifinal. Despite Gujarat needing only 29 runs to surpass Kerala's score, left-arm spinner Aditya Sarwate took all three remaining wickets to bowl them out for 455. Kerala, who made their debut in the Ranji Trophy 68 years ago, had previously reached only their second semifinal. Vidarbha Reaches Final with 80-Run Victory Over Mumbai

In the other semifinal, Vidarbha's Harsh Dubey

stole the show with a match-winning five-wicket haul, leading his team to an 80-run victory over defending champions Mumbai. Dubey's 66-wicket season performance brought Vidarbha closer to their fourth Ranji Trophy final. They will now face Kerala in a highly anticipated final.

Brief Scores:

- Vidarbha: 383 & 292
- Mumbai: 270 & 325 all out (Thakur 66, Mulani 46; Dubey 5/127)
- Kerala: 457 & 114/4 (Saxena 37\*; Hingrajia 2/22)
- Gujarat: 455 all out (Panchal 148, Patel 79, Desai 73; Sarwate 4/111, Saxena 4/149)

## Rahul Dravid Comes Out of Retirement to Play Alongside Son Anvay

Former Indian cricket captain and coach, Rahul Dravid, made an unexpected return to the cricket field on Saturday, joining his son Anvay for a match with the Vijaya Cricket Club (Malur) in the Third Division (Group I) for the Nassur Memorial Shield. This marks a rare father-son cricketing moment, with Dravid, who had retired from professional cricket

years ago, playing alongside his son. Dravid, who had been in Guwahati for the Rajasthan Royals' pre-season camp, returned to the city recently and took the field for this special occasion. The match saw AG Aditya take four wickets (4/60) for the Young Lions.







## Chiranjeevi to Share Screen with Bollywood Actress Rani Mukerji in Upcoming Film



Megastar Chiranjeevi is gearing up for a series of projects, with his current focus on the film Vishwambhar. However, another exciting venture is on the horizon with director Srikant Odela, who recently hit a major success with Dasara. In this untitled project, there is buzz that Bollywood actress Rani Mukerji will star opposite

Chiranjeevi. The role of the heroine holds significant importance in the storyline, and Srikant Odela has recommended Rani Mukerji for the part. After considering the suggestion, Chiranjeevi reportedly gave his approval, and this news is creating a stir in Bollywood circles. The film will be presented by actor Nani.

## Rakul Preet Singh's Movie "Mere Husband Ki Biwi" Offers Bumper Deal to Audiences



Rakul Preet Singh's latest Hindi film Mere Husband Ki Biwi was released yesterday, starring Arjun Kapoor and Bhumi Pednekar. To attract more viewers, the producers have come up with a "Buy One, Get One Free" offer for movie tickets, similar to promotional tactics often seen in business to boost sales. However, the film's

collections have not been as impressive as expected. Meanwhile, Vicky Kaushal and Rashmika Mandanna's Chhava is creating waves at the box office. Despite the exciting offer, the audience turnout for Rakul's movie remains lukewarm. The promotional strategy hopes to draw more crowds into theaters.

## SSMB 29 Shooting Underway in Hyderabad, SS Rajamouli's Press Meet Expected Soon

Superstar Mahesh Babu's eagerly awaited film SSMB 29, directed by SS Rajamouli, is currently under production, with the team using advanced technology, including 35mm/70mm scanners, similar to those used by Hollywood director Christopher Nolan. The film, with a budget surpassing Rs. 1000 Crores, promises a global-scale adventure. The first schedule is taking place in

Hyderabad, featuring large sets such as a replica of Varanasi's Manikarnika Ghat. The movie will take audiences on a journey from Varanasi to African jungles. Mahesh Babu stars in a powerful role, with Priyanka Chopra Jonas playing the female lead. A press meet with Rajamouli and Mahesh Babu is expected soon, where more details on the film's story and characters will be shared.

## "Odela 2" Teaser Unveiled: Tamannaah's Intense Role Raises Anticipation

The teaser of Odela 2, starring Tamannaah in the lead role, has been released, and it promises to deliver thrilling moments. The film, a sequel to the successful 2022 movie Odela Railway Station, has generated massive expectations among fans. Directed by Akosh Teja, with renowned director Sampath Nandi providing the story and producing the film, Odela 2 has captured attention for its intense scenes.

The teaser, released during the Mahakumbh Mela, showcases Tamannaah as a fierce character resembling a "lady Aghora," adding to the suspenseful vibe. Her portrayal as Shiva Shakti leaves the audience intrigued, and the overall visual experience has caught the public's eye. The film's music is composed by Ajneesh Loknath, with Madhu Creations producing under the banner of D. Madhu.



## Mahath Raghavendra's Romantic Comedy Series "Emoji" Set to Stream on Aha



A new romantic comedy series Emoji, aimed at the youth, is all set to stream on the OTT platform Aha starting February 28th. This series, originally a hit in Tamil in 2022, is now making its way to Telugu audiences. The story revolves around love and marriage, blending humor and emotions.

Starring Mahath Raghavendra, Manasa Chaudhari, and Devika in key roles, Emoji

follows the journey of a young man and woman who fall in love, only for a series of events to pull them apart. The young man, deciding to move on, begins a new relationship with another girl, but his first love reappears, creating tension. Directed by Sampath, this series is expected to captivate viewers with its light-hearted yet meaningful storyline.

## Vicky Kaushal Honoured After PM Modi Praises "Chhaava"



Actor Vicky Kaushal expressed his immense gratitude after Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised his historical action drama Chhaava. During the inaugural function of the 98th Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan (ABMSS), Modi highlighted the success of the film, stating, "Chhaava is making headlines everywhere right now." The film, which has grossed over Rs 300 crore globally, features Kaushal portraying Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, son of the

Maratha empire's founder, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Kaushal took to Instagram, saying, "Honoured beyond words! Grateful to Hon. PM Narendra Modi ji. #Chhaava." Rashmika Mandanna, who plays Yesubai in the movie, also shared her thanks on social media. Chhaava has been declared tax-free in Goa and Madhya Pradesh, and the film has received widespread recognition for its portrayal of Sambhaji Maharaj's legacy.



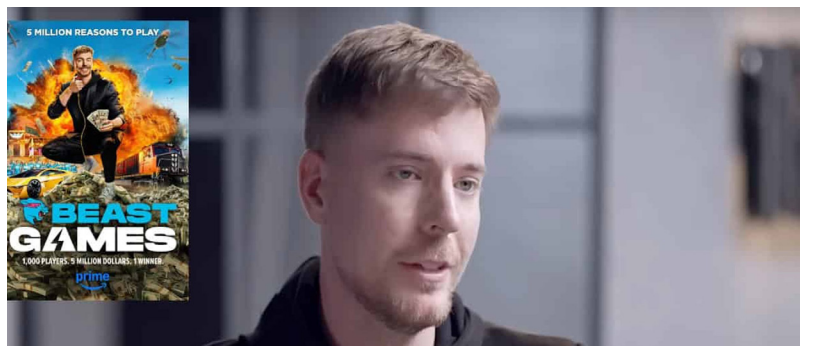
## Ali Fazal and Sonali Bendre Join Forces with "Paatal Lok" Director Prosit Roy for an Action Thriller



Ali Fazal is set to star in a high-octane action thriller series helmed by Prosit Roy, the director of Paatal Lok Season 1. Alongside Fazal, Bollywood actress Sonali Bendre will play a key role in the series, adding to the excitement of the project. The shoot is scheduled to begin in April, with Fazal expected to showcase a never-before-seen avatar. The series, which remains untitled, promises to be a large-scale action spectacle, combining intense sequences

with a compelling narrative. A source close to the production shared that Prosit Roy's storytelling expertise and Fazal's dedication, combined with Bendre's strong screen presence, will make this an exceptional project. In addition to this, Fazal is busy with Rakht Brahmmand, a period fantasy drama by Raj & DK, and is also preparing for several upcoming projects, including Mirzapur: The Film, Metro In Dino, Lahore 1947, Thug Life, and Rule Breakers.

## MrBeast Admits Losing Rs 86 Crores on "Beast Games" Show, Talks Mental Health Struggles



YouTube star MrBeast, real name Jimmy Donaldson, revealed that his biggest project, Beast Games, ended up costing him a staggering Rs 86 crores in losses. Despite being one of the most popular YouTubers with a net worth of around Rs 5000 crores, the

show, although a massive success on Prime Video, didn't recoup its massive production cost. In an interview on The Diary of a CEO podcast, MrBeast shared that he spent over Rs 860 crores on the project, with Rs 440 crores coming from his own savings.